

"Astonishing!"

BRYAN KONIECKO, AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER



THE STONE HEART

THE NAMELESS CITY

FAITH ERIN HICKS

COLOR BY JORDIE BELLAIRE



YISUN



RIVER OF LIVES



LIRD



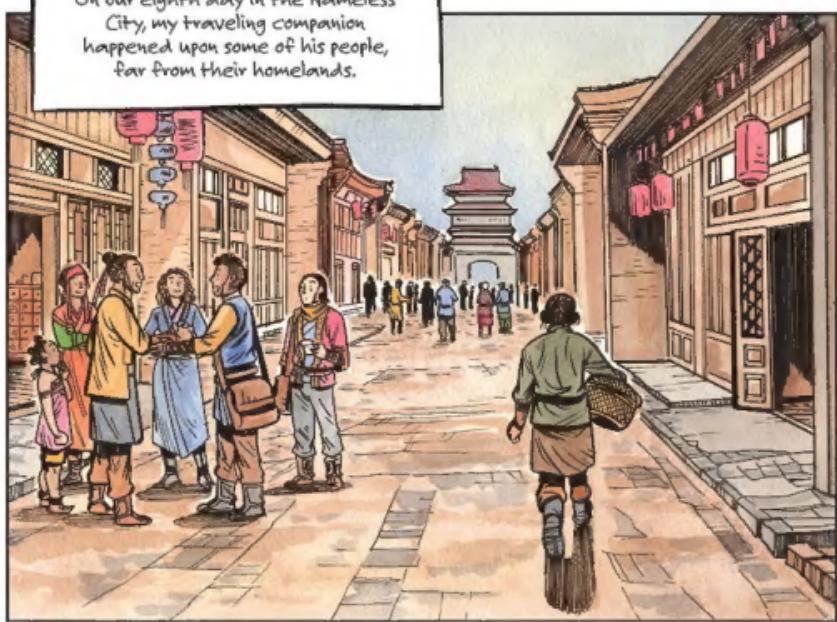
THE NAMELESS CITY



THE STONE HEART



On our eighth day in the Nameless City, my traveling companion happened upon some of his people, far from their homelands.

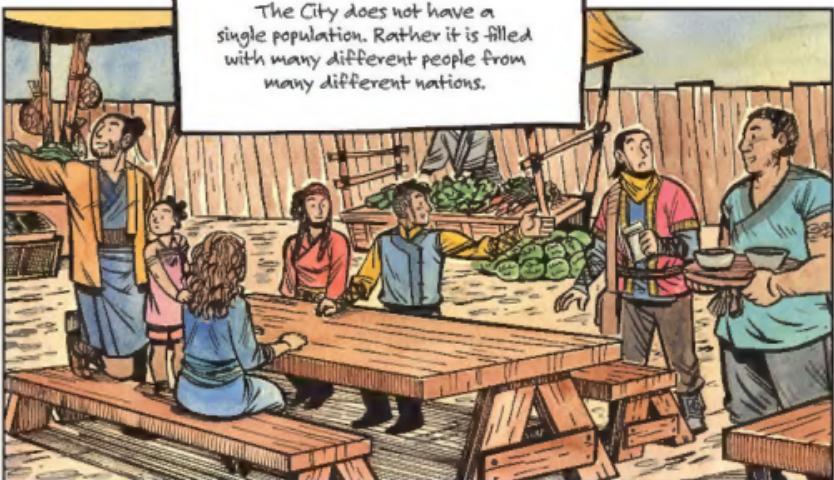


They had traveled miles to buy and sell in the City. It was a common story, repeated by many we spoke to.





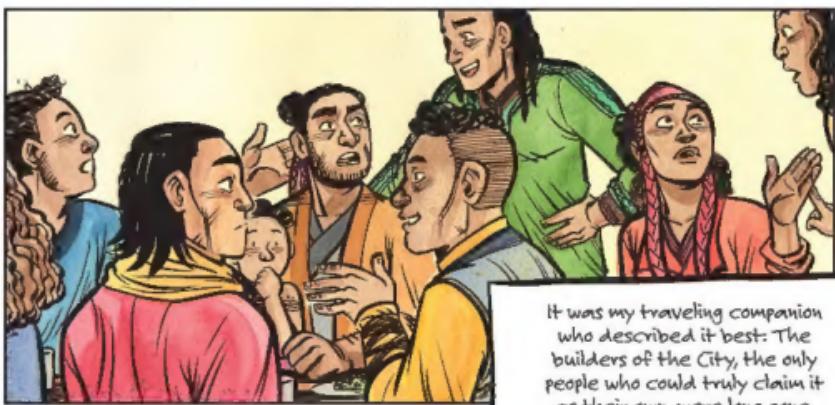
The Nameless City is different from the many cities we passed through on our journey down the River of Lives.



The City does not have a single population. Rather it is filled with many different people from many different nations.



I had to ask: who does the City belong to? Who are its rightful people?



What remained were the people who lived in the City. Many people. Many different nations.



All called the City their home.



And who could say that
any of them were wrong?



THE STONEHEART

THE NAMELESS CITY

FAITH ERIN HICKS

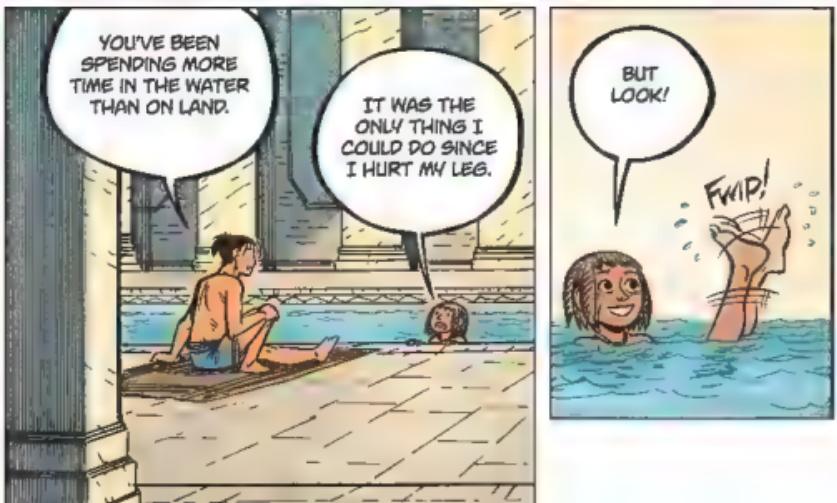
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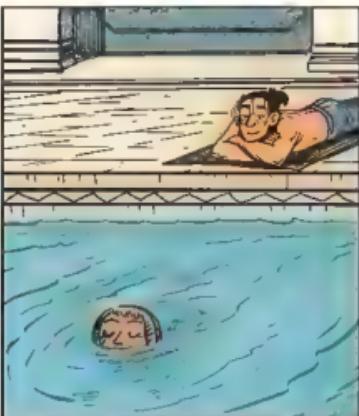
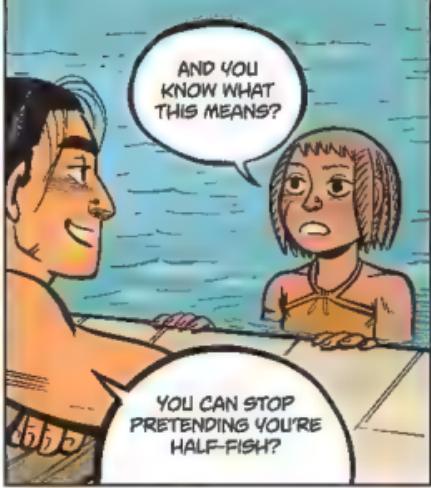


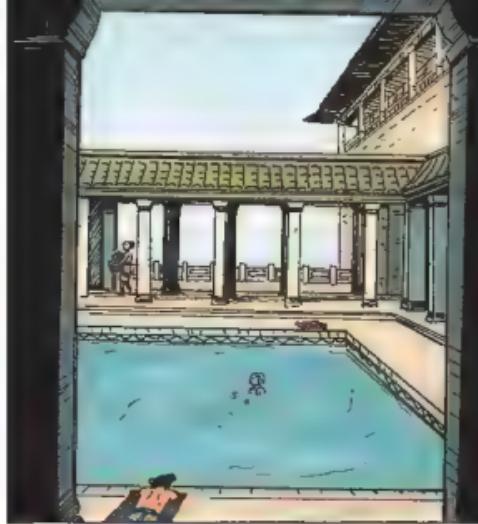
First Second
NEW YORK

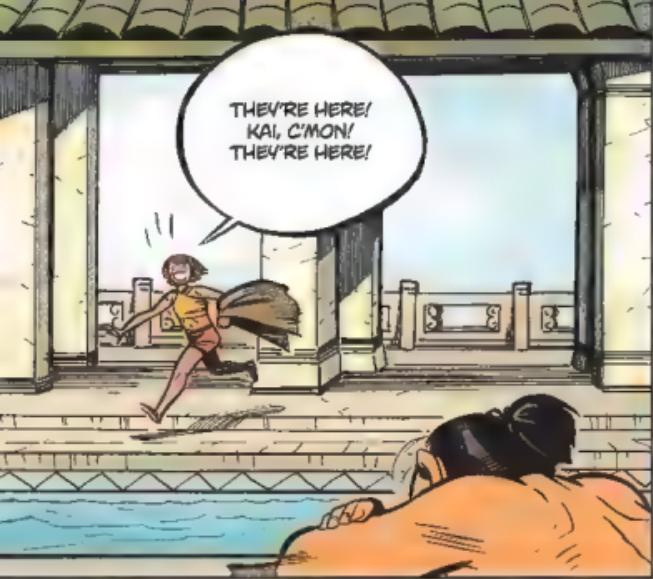


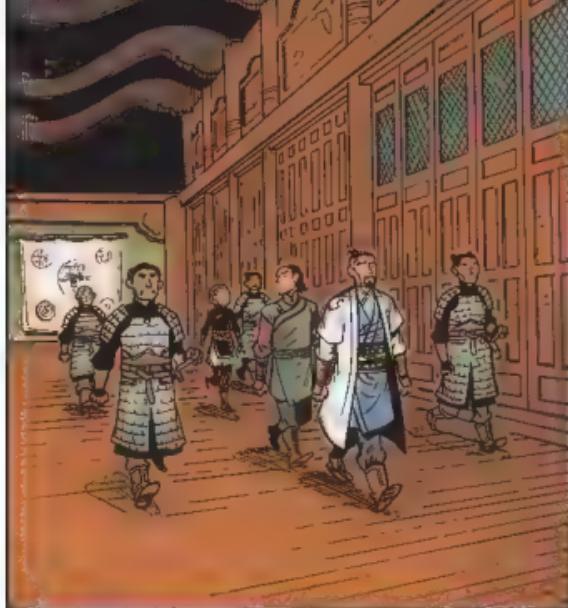


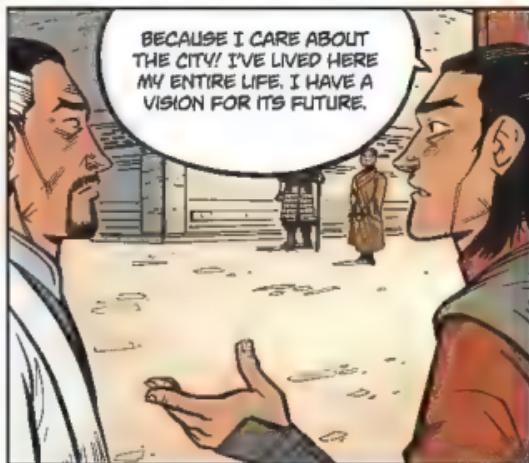


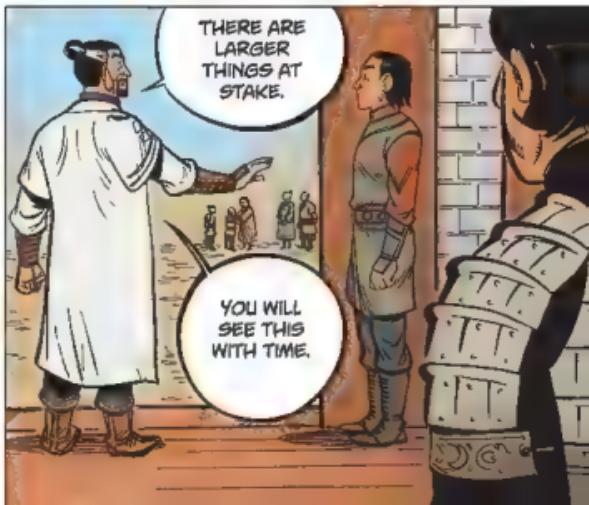
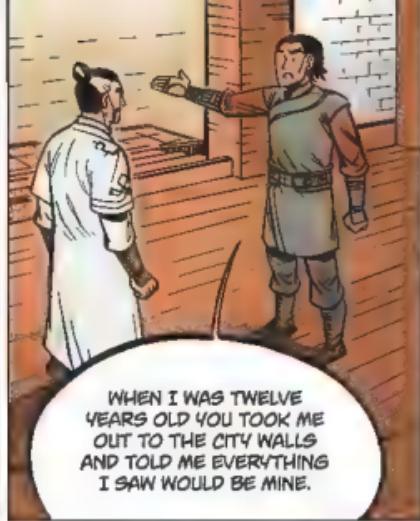






















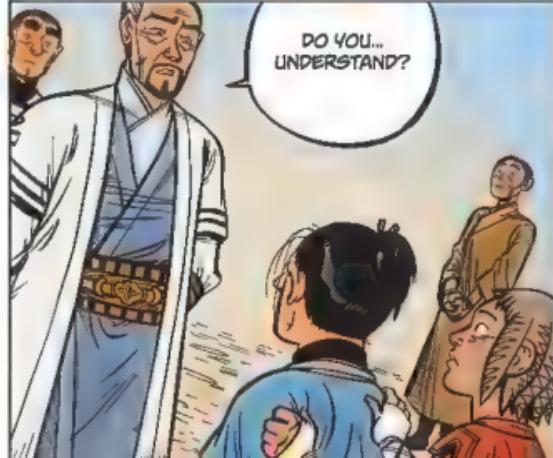
ALL OF THE TRAITORS WERE BANISHED.

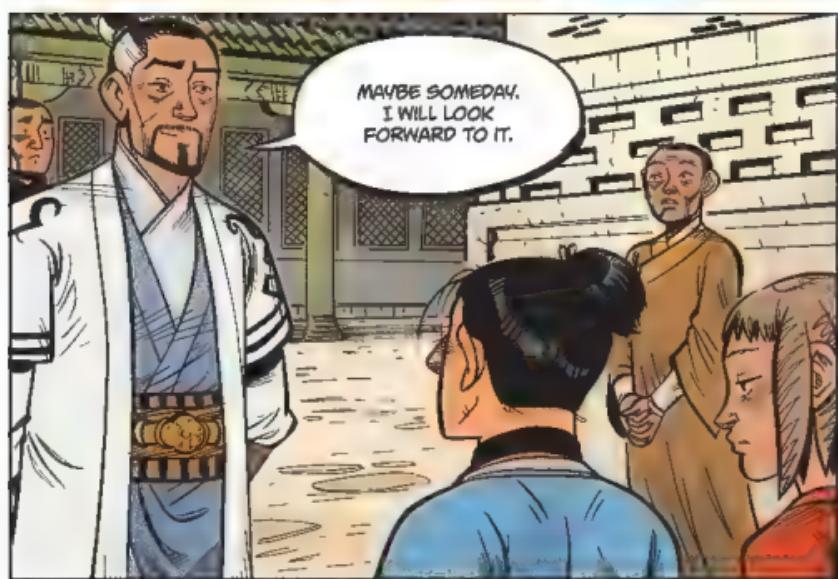
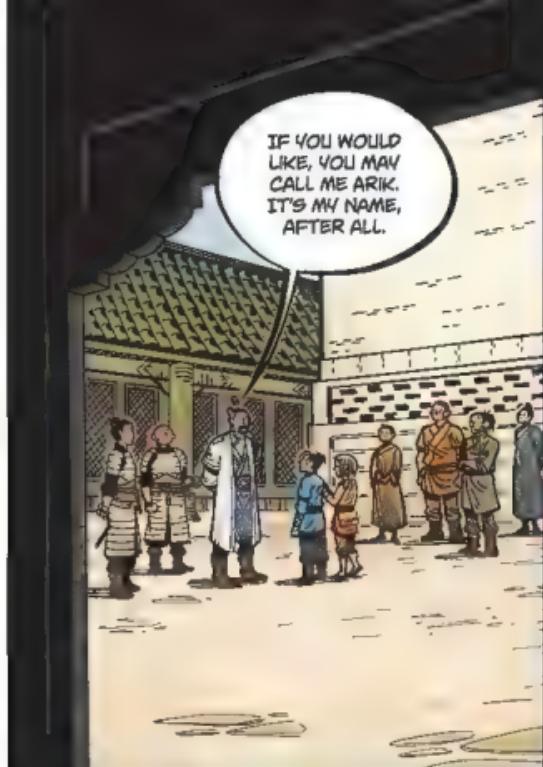
THEY CANNOT RETURN TO THE DAO HOMELANDS OR THE CITY.





IN THE PAST I
WOULD HAVE EXECUTED
THEM ALL. BUT NOW...THINGS
ARE DIFFERENT.















I MEAN, WE WERE
JUST DOING OUR JOBS.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE DIDN'T
BELIEVE YOU WHEN YOU
SAID THERE WERE
ASSASSINS IN
THE PALACE.

LOOK, UM, THANKS
AGAIN FOR SPEAKING
UP ON OUR BEHALF
TO THE GENERAL.

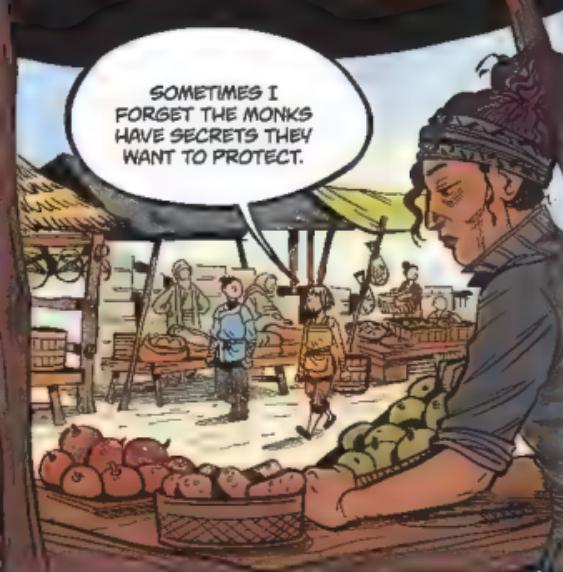


BETTER!

UH, THANKS
FOR ASKING.







SOMETIMES I
FORGET THE MONKS
HAVE SECRETS THEY
WANT TO PROTECT.



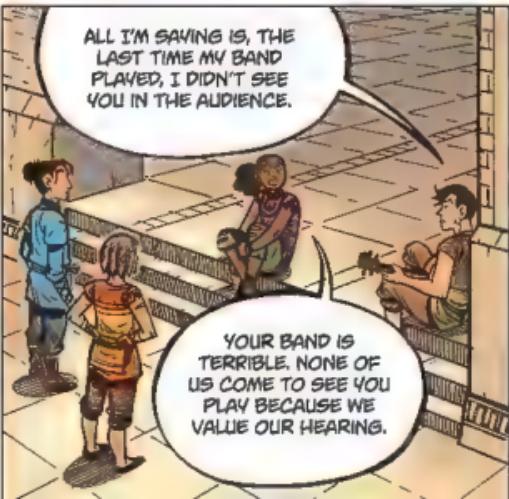
WHAT
KIND OF
SECRETS?

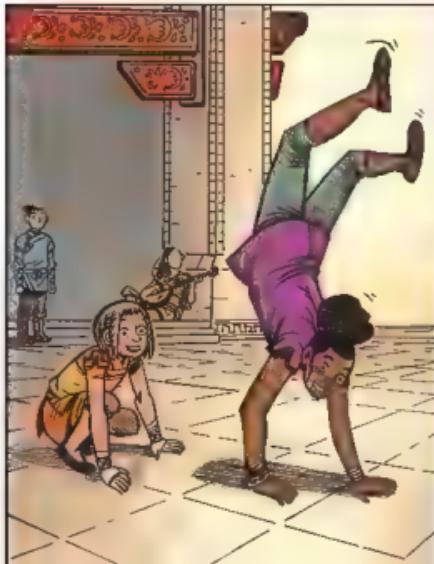


JUST...
SECRETS.









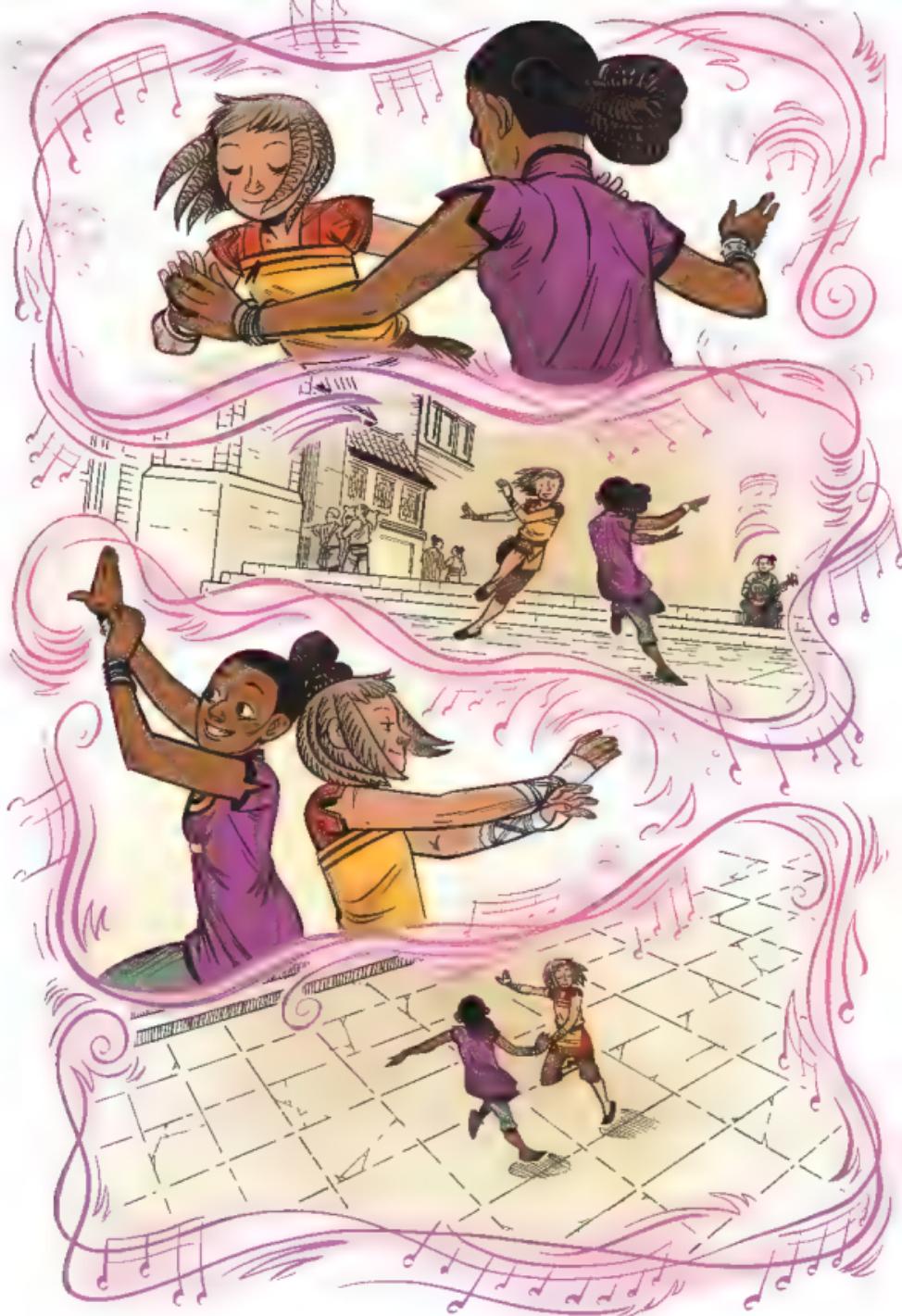














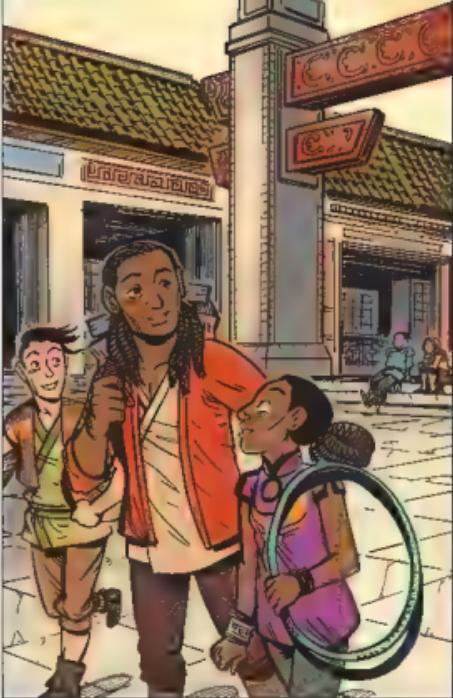
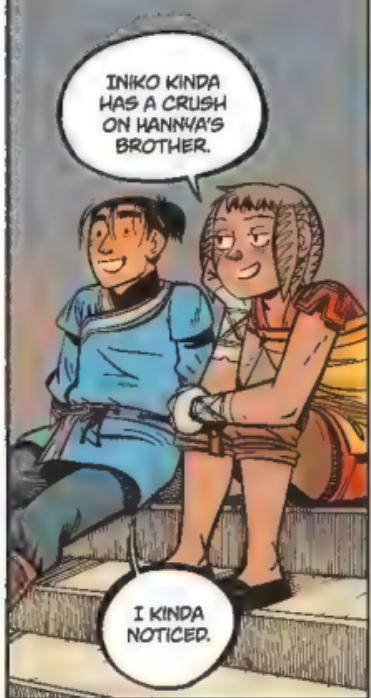








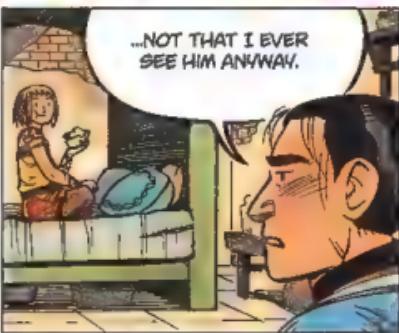


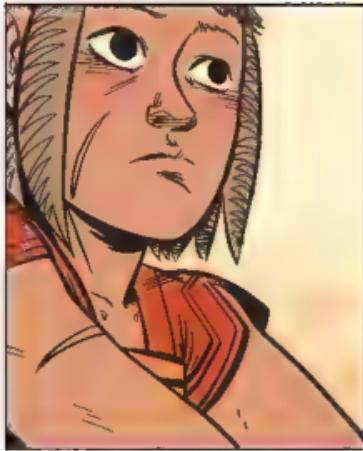
















MY FATHER
WAS FROM THE
YISUN NATION, LIKE
JOAH. BUT HE'D LIVED
HIS WHOLE LIFE
IN THE CITY.



MY MOTHER
WAS FROM AN ISLAND
NATION IN THE WEST.
I DON'T KNOW ITS
NAME. SHE MET MY
FATHER WHEN SHE WAS
TRAVELING THROUGH
THE CITY.



THEY FELL
IN LOVE AND SHE
DECIDED TO STAY.
MY MOTHER NAMED
ME AFTER HER
GRANDMOTHER.



YOUR GREAT-
GRANDMOTHER
WAS NAMED
RAT?



NO. WHO
NAMES
THEIR KID
RAT?



BUT...YOUR
NAME IS RAT.

NO. IT'S WHAT
I CHOSE FOR
MYSELF AFTER
MY PARENTS
WERE KILLED.





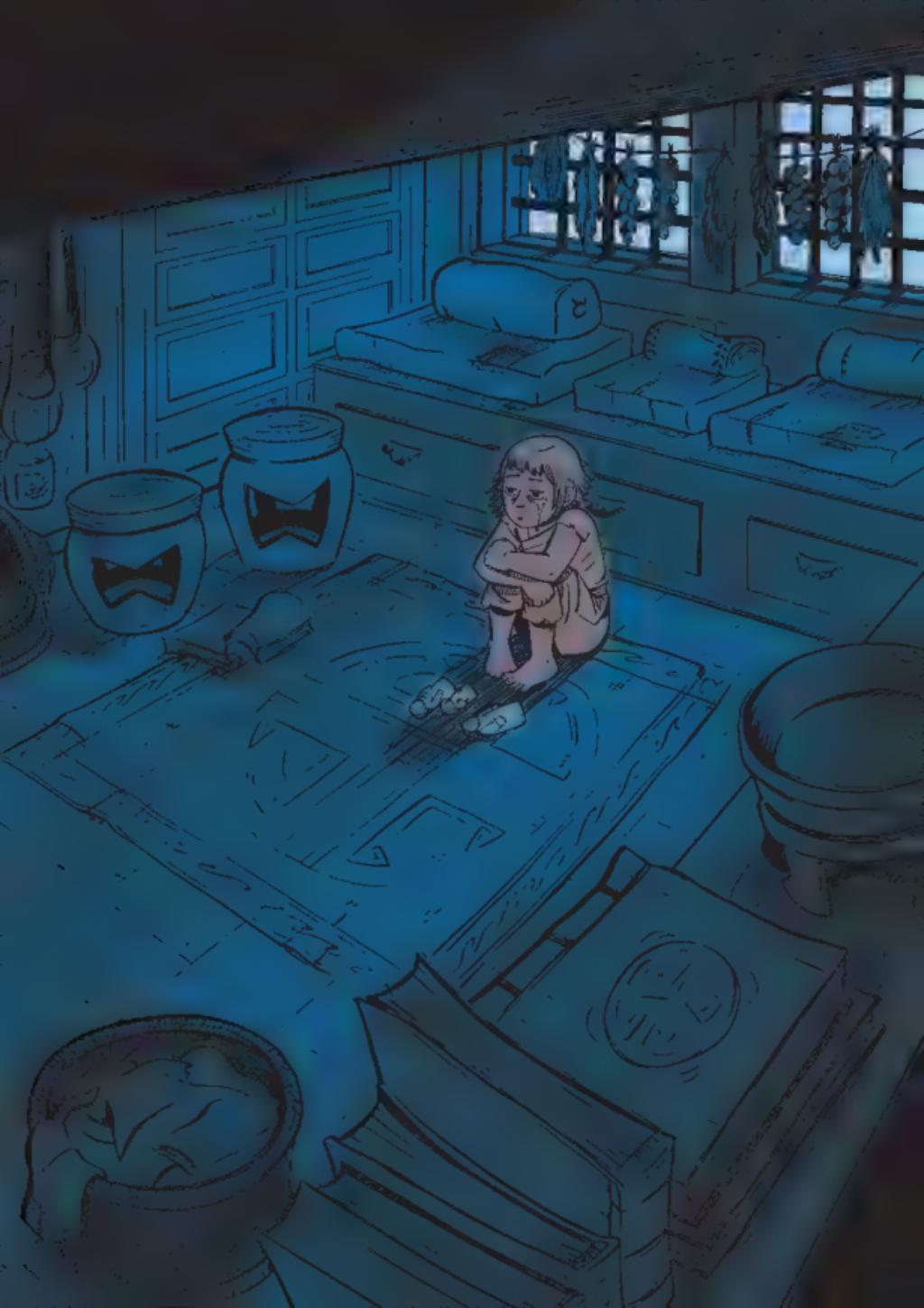
ONE DAY DAO SOLDIERS
CAME TO OUR SHOP. THEY
TRIED TO ARREST MY DAD.



MY MOTHER TOLD ME TO
HIDE IN THE BACK OF THE
STORE, AND NOT TO COME OUT
UNTIL SHE CAME TO GET ME.



I THINK MY DAD FOUGHT
THE SOLDIERS. MAYBE IF HE
HADN'T, MY PARENTS WOULD
STILL BE ALIVE.





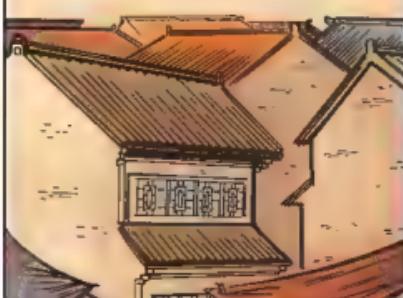
I STAYED
HIDDEN FOR
THREE DAYS,
WAITING.
MY MOTHER
NEVER CAME
TO GET ME.



SO I WENT
TO THE STONE
HEART FOR HELP.



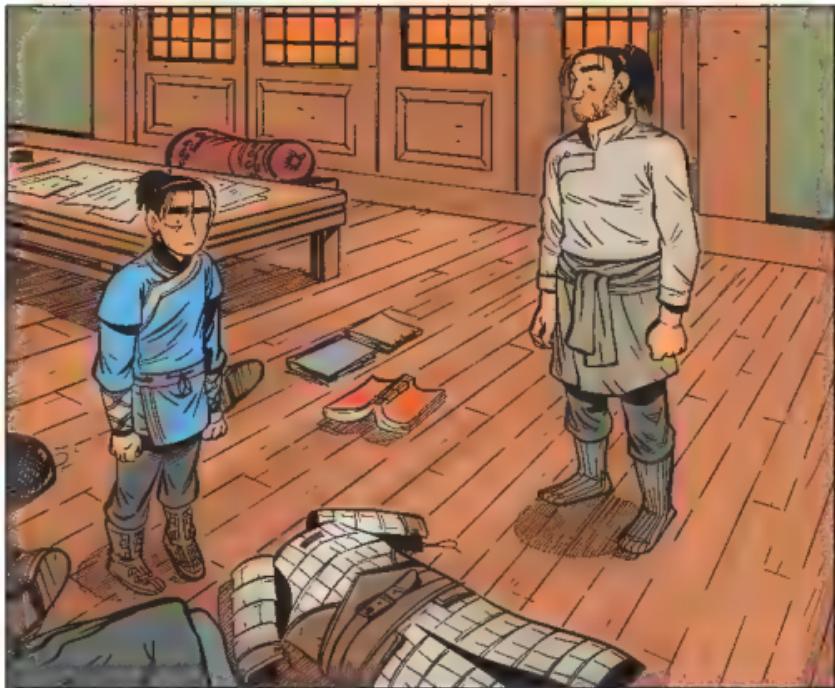








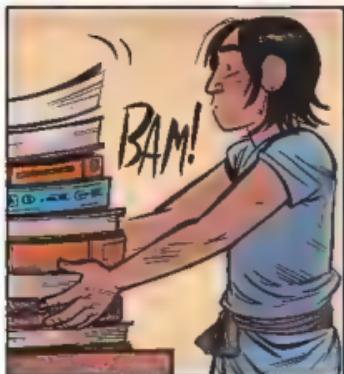














I WANT TO
DO SOMETHING TO
HELP MY DAD'S PLAN
FOR A COUNCIL
OF NATIONS.



MAYBE I CAN
FIND OUT SOMETHING
ABOUT WHATEVER
POWER THE NORTHERN
PEOPLE HAD.



MAYBE IF
THE DAO HAD
THEIR POWER, WE
COULD MAKE THE
OTHER NATIONS OF
THE WORLD JOIN
THE COUNCIL.



WHATEVER IT
WAS THAT GAVE
THEM THE ABILITY
TO TUNNEL THROUGH
THE MOUNTAIN AND
BUILD THE PASSAGE
TO THE SEA.



WE COULD
MAKE A BETTER
FUTURE FOR
THE CITY.



DO YOU
KNOW
ANYTHING
ABOUT THE
POWER THE
NORTHERN
PEOPLE HAD?

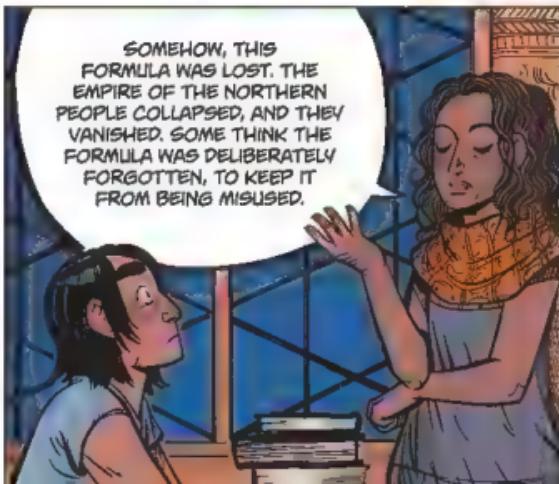
JUST
LEGENDS.



SOME SAY THE
NORTHERN PEOPLE
HAD THE ABILITY
TO CONTROL THE ENERGY
OF THE MOUNTAIN ITSELF.
THEY CREATED THE
PASSAGE BY WILLING
IT INTO BEING.



OTHERS BELIEVE
THEY COMMANDED
A LEGION OF FLYING
CREATURES, WHO TORE
A HOLE IN THE MOUNTAIN
WITH THEIR CLAWS.







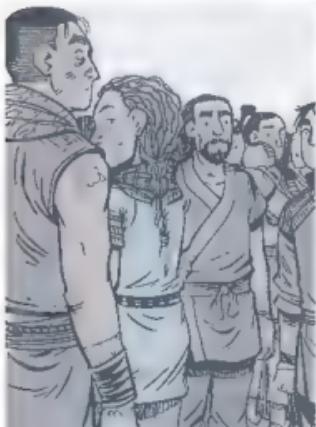


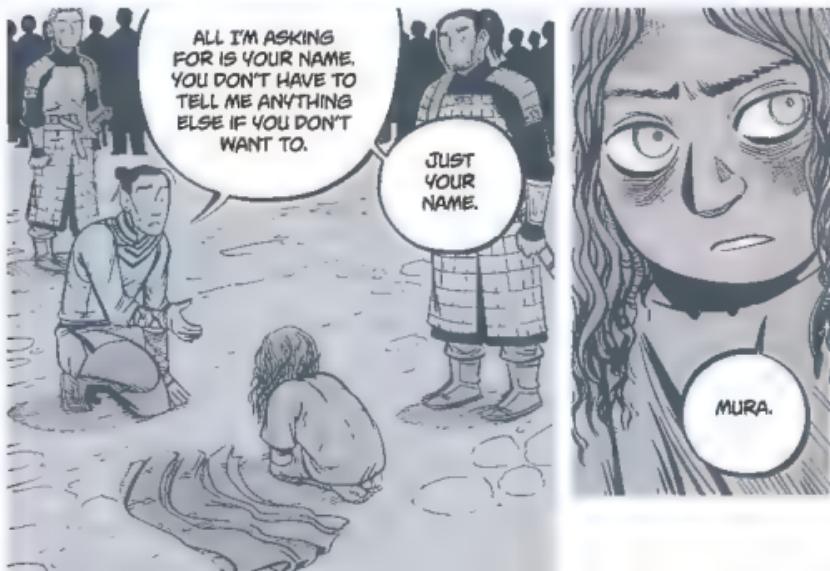
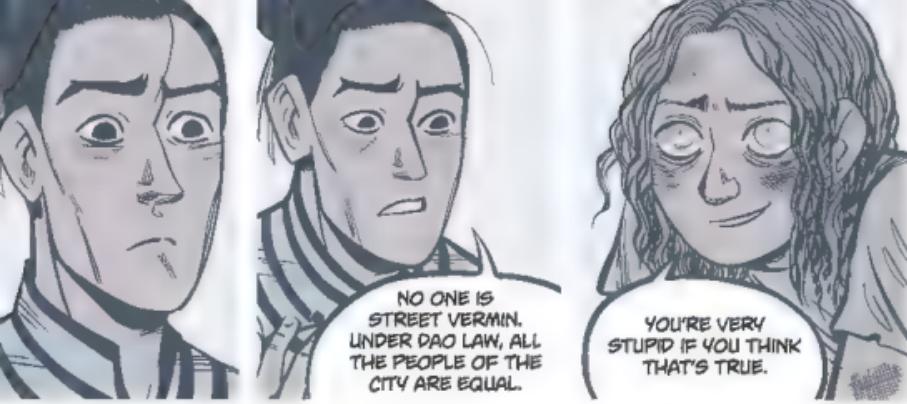
EIGHT YEARS
AGO-

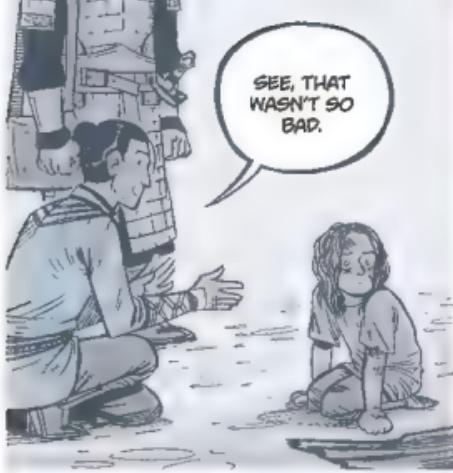




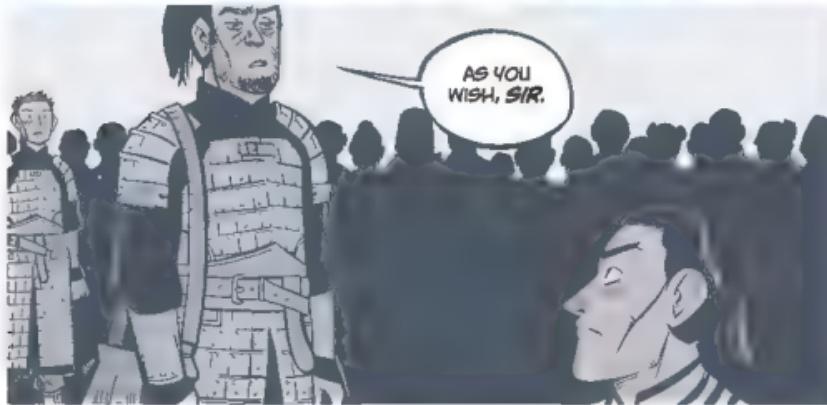
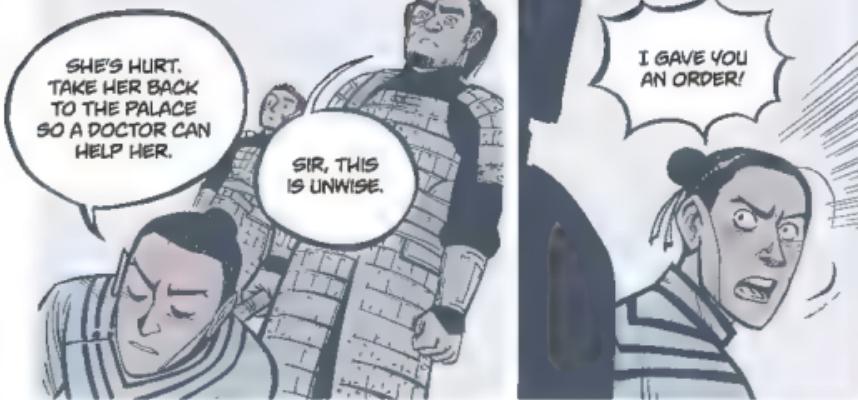










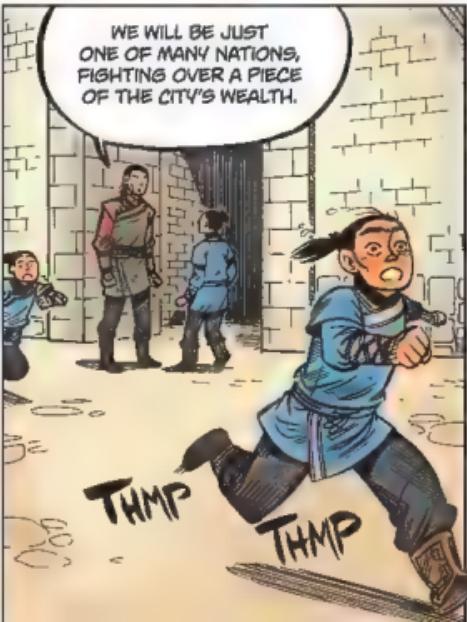






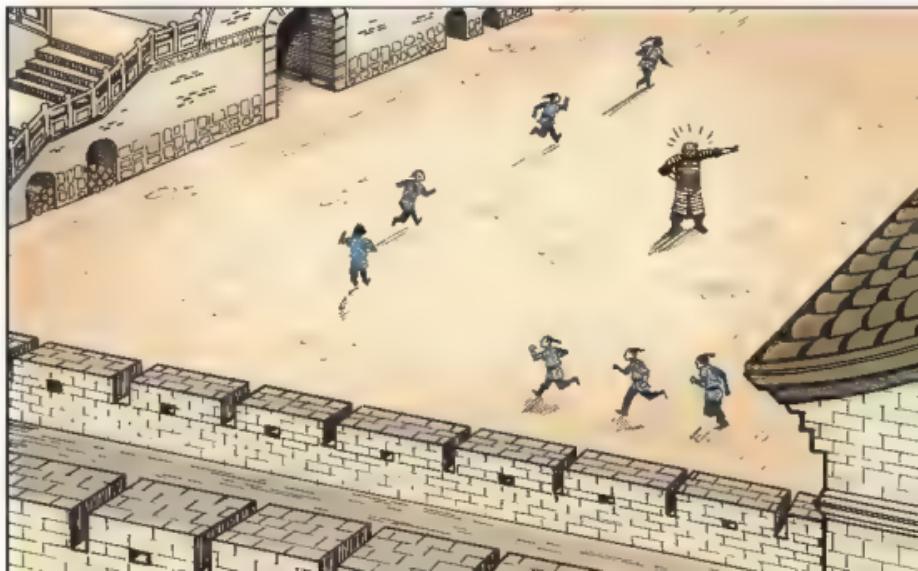






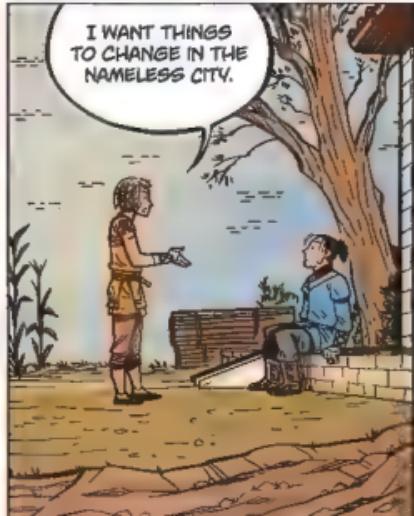
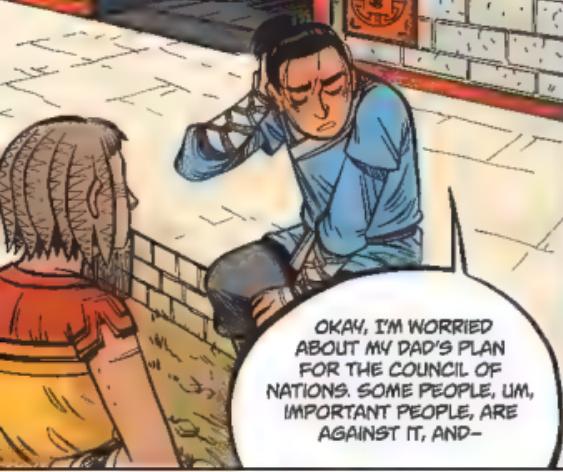










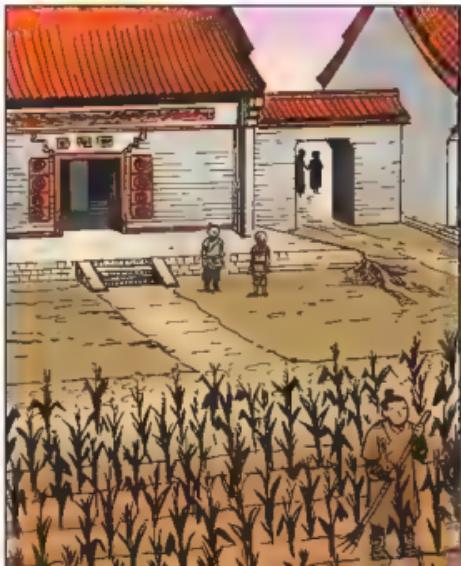


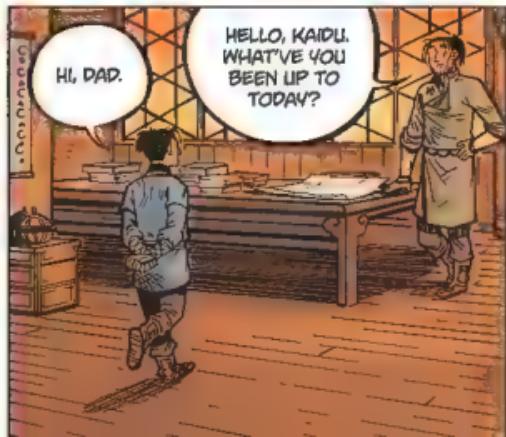


















I DIDN'T LIKE IT
VERY MUCH, TO
BE HONEST. I WAS
ALWAYS TERRIBLE
AT FIGHTING.

ME TOO.



YOU PROBABLY
GET THAT FROM
ME, BECAUSE
YOUR MOTHER
CAN BE GENUINELY
TERRIFYING.



THIS COUNCIL MAY
HELP US AVOID REPEATING
THE CYCLE OF INVASION AND
WAR THAT'S BEEN A PART OF
CITY LIFE FOR CENTURIES.



IF WE COULD
JUST GET THE YISUN
TO TALK TO US...
BEFORE I LOSE
SUPPORT FROM THE
DAO GENERALS.

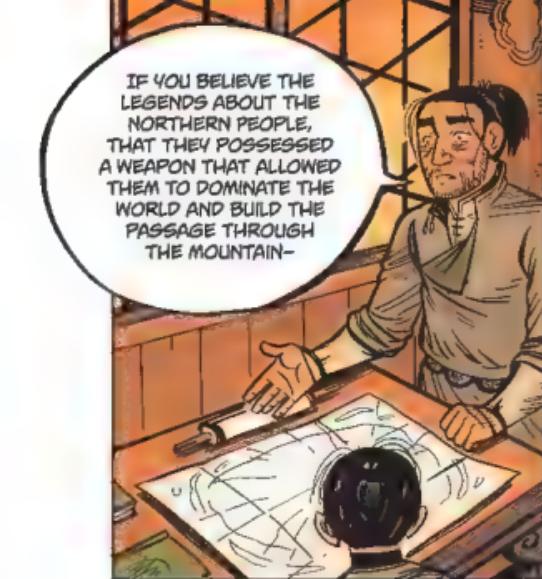


BUT THE
GENERAL OF ALL BLADES
SUPPORTS VOLI.



YOU'RE RIGHT,
HE DOES. BUT EVEN
IF ARIK IS IN FAVOR
OF MY PLAN, HE
NEEDS THE SUPPORT
OF HIS GENERALS
AND THE TRIBE
LEADERS.





IF YOU BELIEVE THE LEGENDS ABOUT THE NORTHERN PEOPLE, THAT THEY POSSESSED A WEAPON THAT ALLOWED THEM TO DOMINATE THE WORLD AND BUILD THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN-



THEN, OF COURSE, HAVING THAT POWER WOULD GIVE THE DAO A MILITARY ADVANTAGE. WE COULD FORCE THE YISUN TO JOIN ANY COUNCIL WE CHOSE.



BUT WE DON'T WANT TO FORCE THEM.

WE WANT—I WANT—THIS COUNCIL TO BE BUILT ON COOPERATION AND PEACE.



I BELIEVE THIS IS SOMETHING THE DAO CAN DO. SHOULD DO.

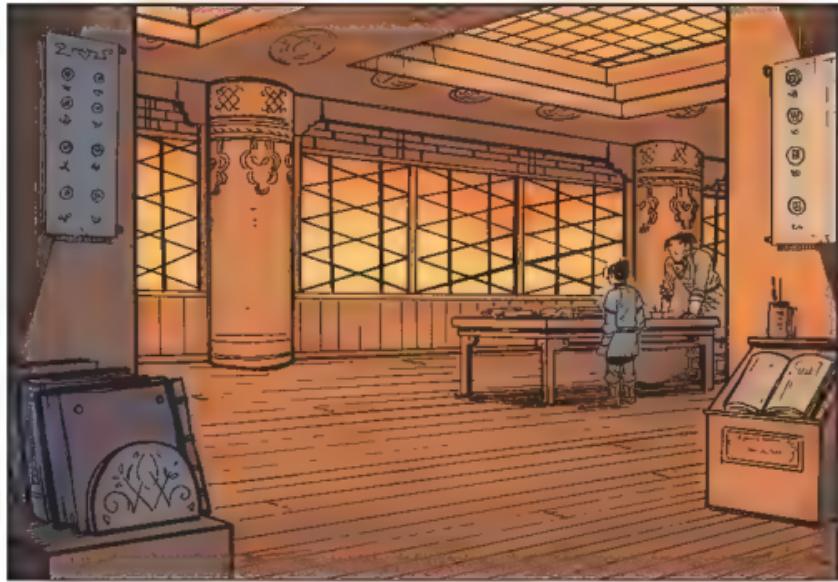


WHY?

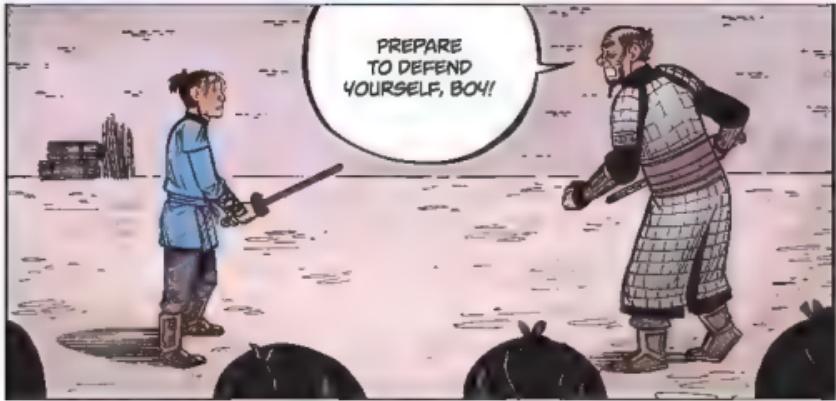


BECAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO HAVE TO GO TO WAR WHEN YOU'RE SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD.











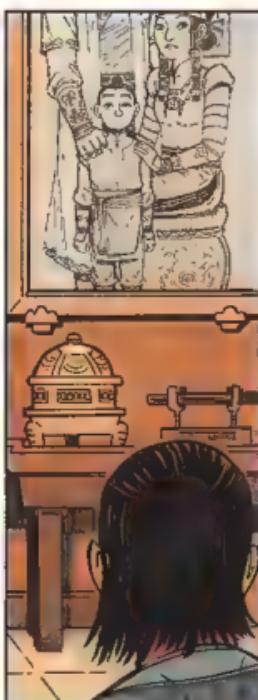
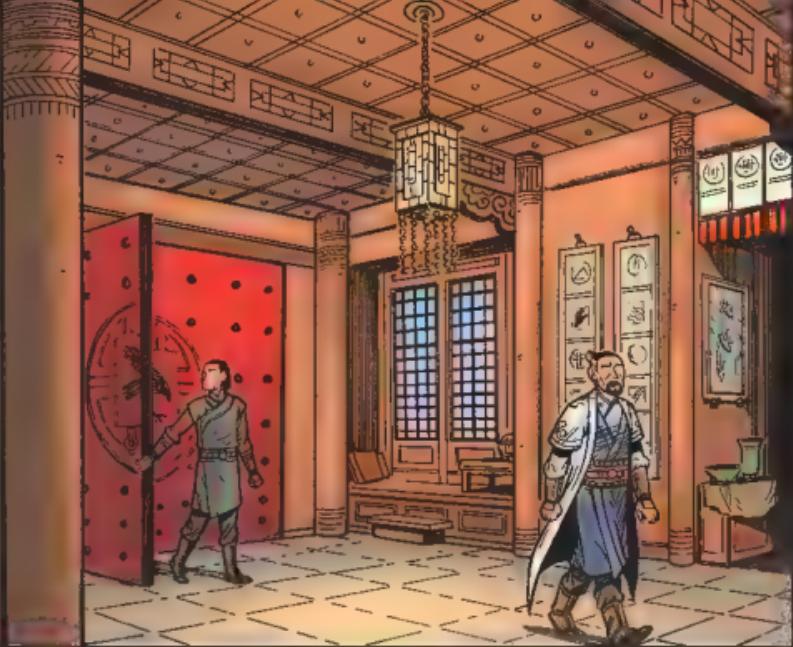


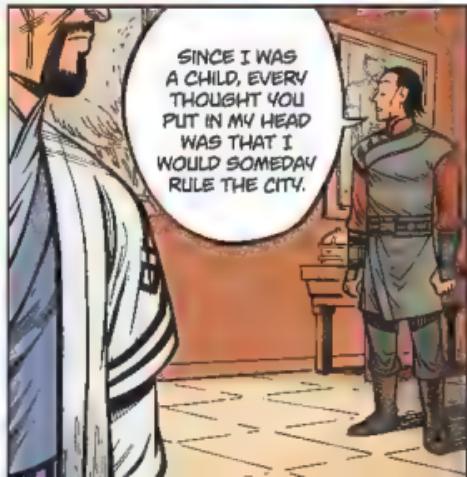
















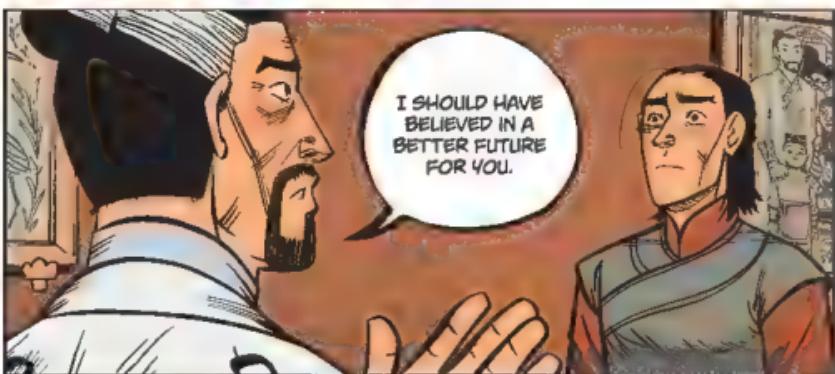
YOU CANNOT BELIEVE THAT NONSENSE THAT ANDREN HAS BEEN PREACHING, THAT THE EMPIRE IS DESTINED TO COLLAPSE.

I DO BELIEVE ANDREN. THAT IS ONE REASON. THERE ARE OTHERS.





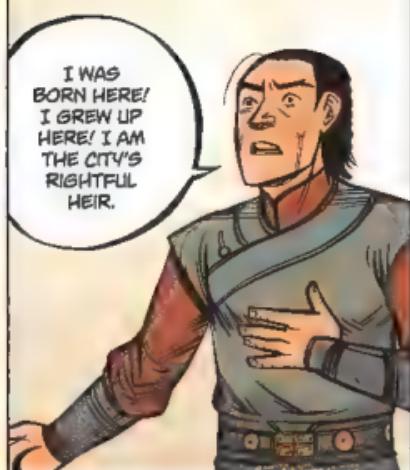








THE CITY
IS A PART OF ME,
IN A WAY THAT IT
ISN'T A PART
OF YOU.



I WAS
BORN HERE!
I GREW UP
HERE! I AM
THE CITY'S
RIGHTFUL
HEIR.



YOU CAN'T TAKE
THAT AWAY FROM ME
BECAUSE...BECAUSE
YOU FEEL SORRY
FOR A CHILD!



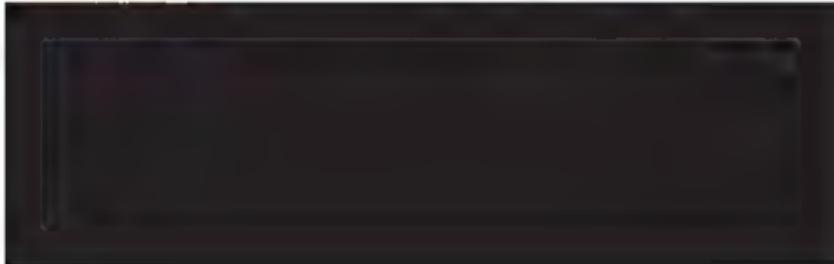
A CHILD
WHO SAVED
YOUR LIFE.



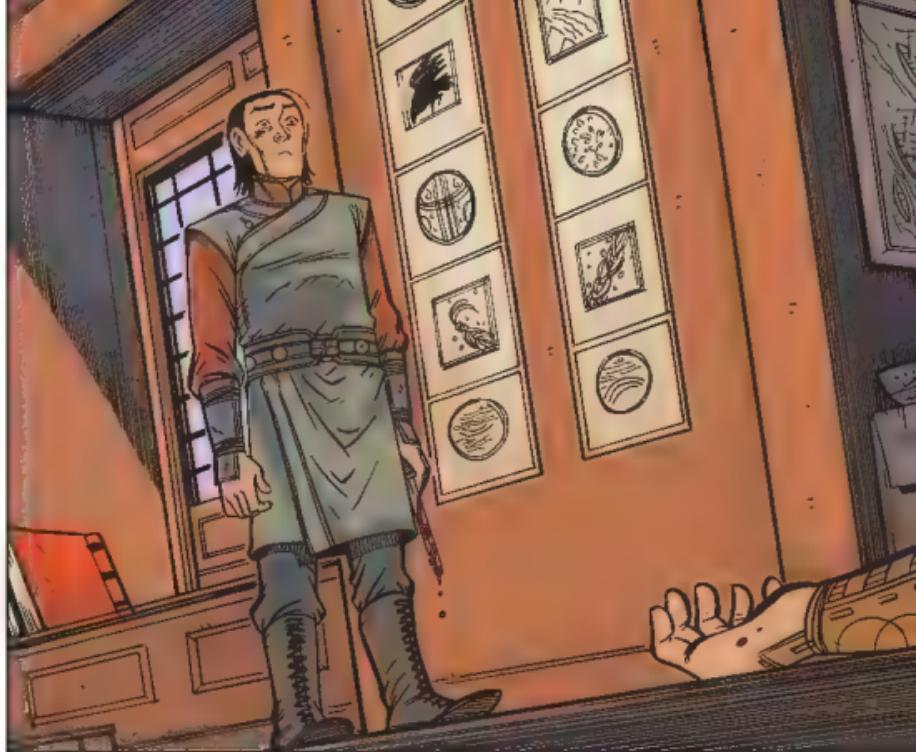


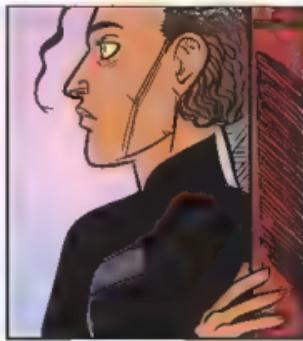
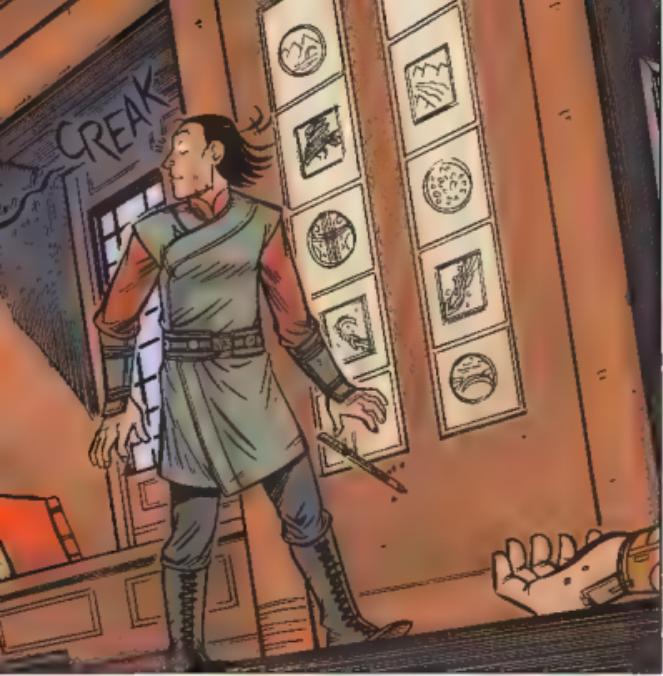




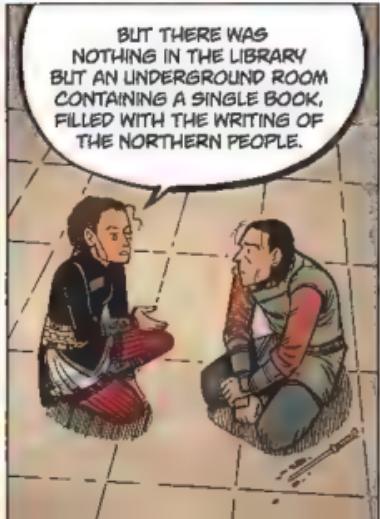


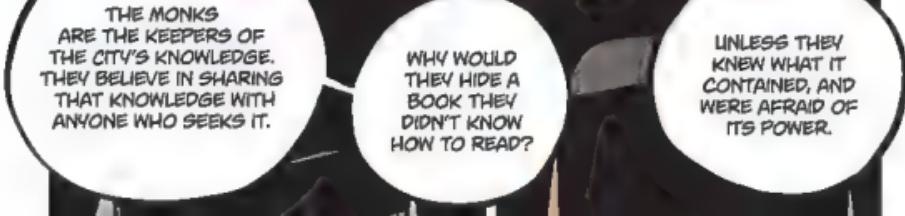
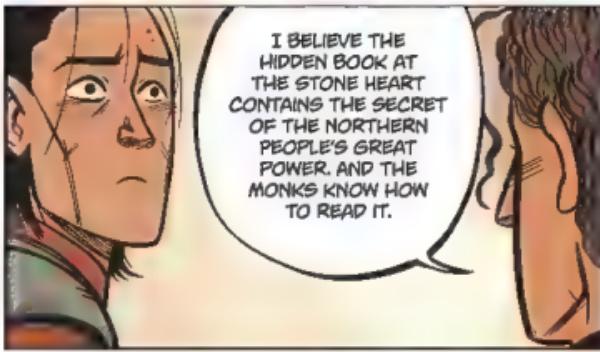








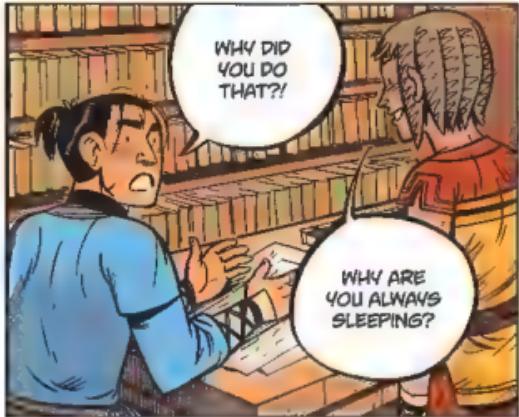














IT'S FUNNY HOW YOU
SAVED THE LIFE OF THE
GENERAL OF ALL BLADES
A FEW MONTHS AGO, BUT
YOU'RE STILL GETTING
PUNISHED FOR BEING BAD
AT FIGHTING.



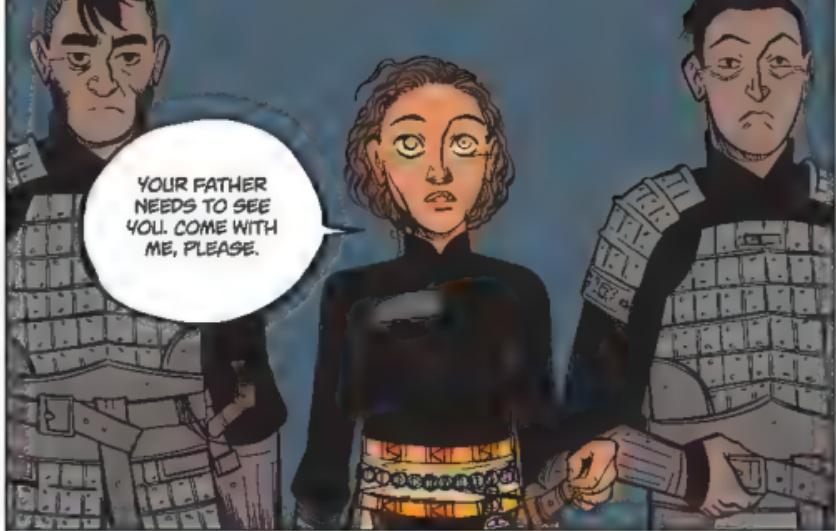
I DIDN'T DO ANY
FIGHTING WHEN WE
SAVED THE GENERAL.
JUST A LOT OF
RUNNING, DODGING,
AND FALLING.



TOO BAD BEING
GOOD AT RUNNING,
DODGING, AND FALLING
ISN'T IMPORTANT
TO THE GREAT
DAO EMPIRE.



Kaidu.

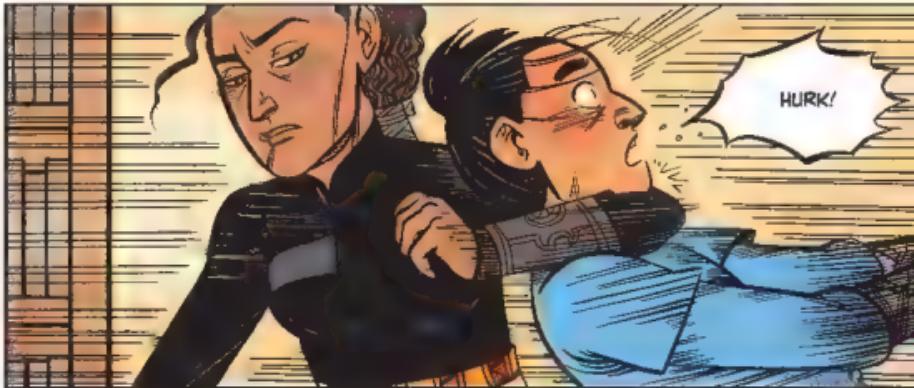


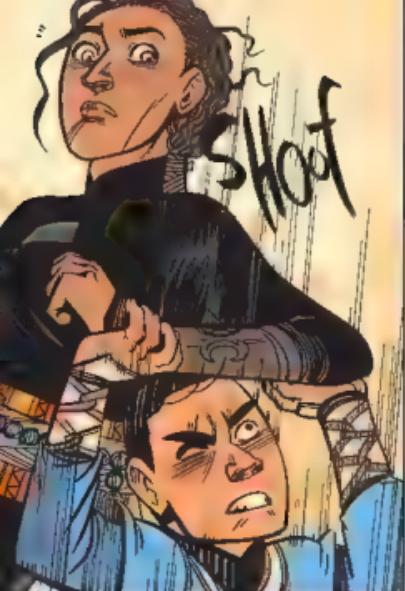






CRASH



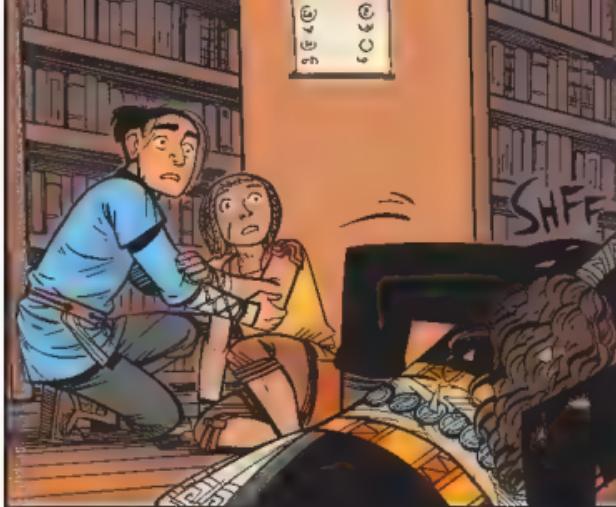








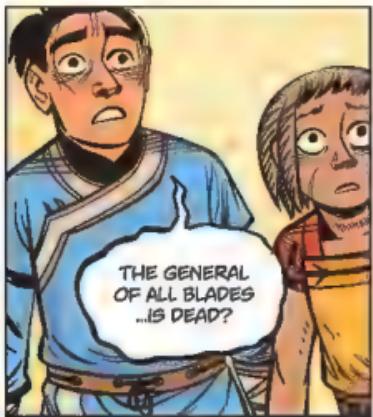








GO WHERE?















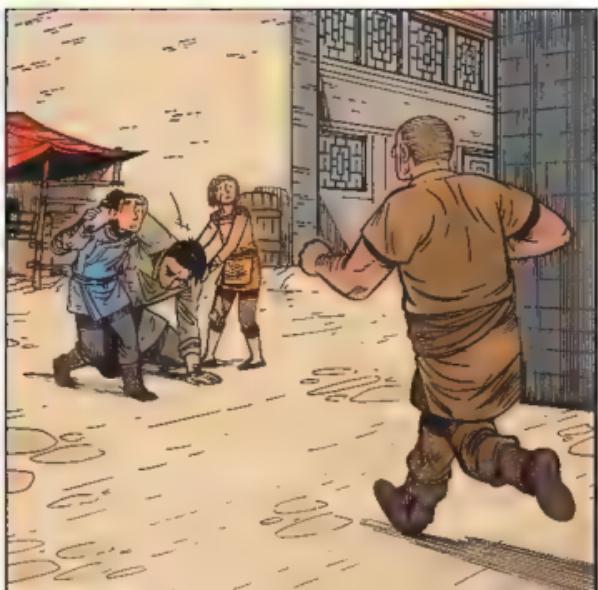










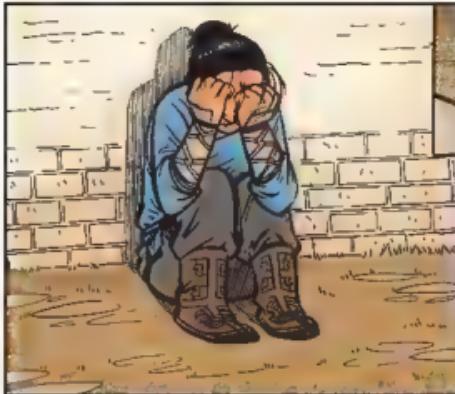






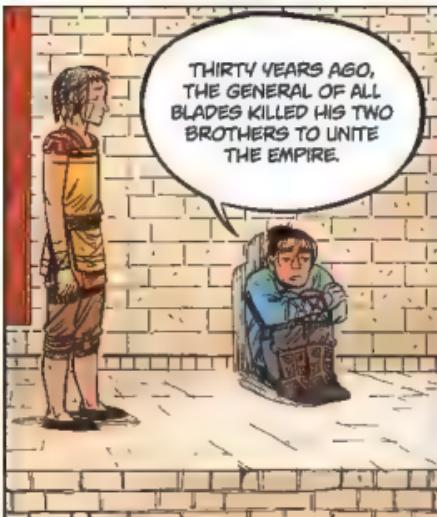


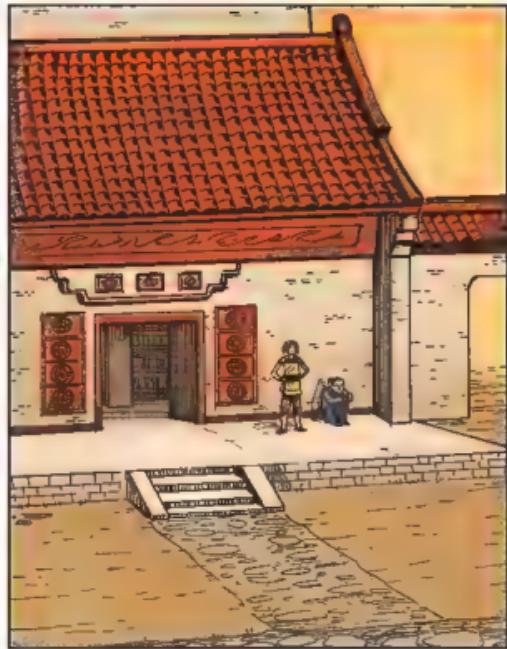




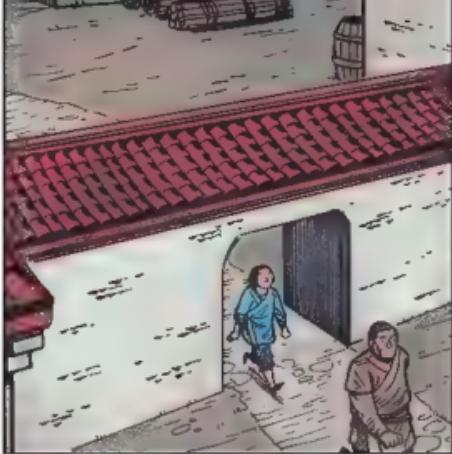












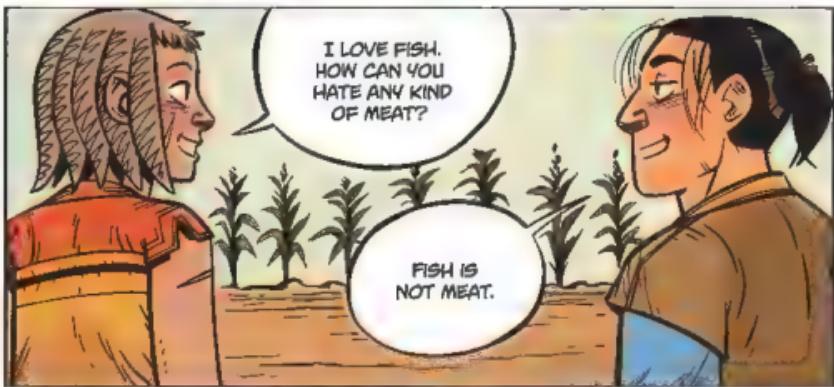
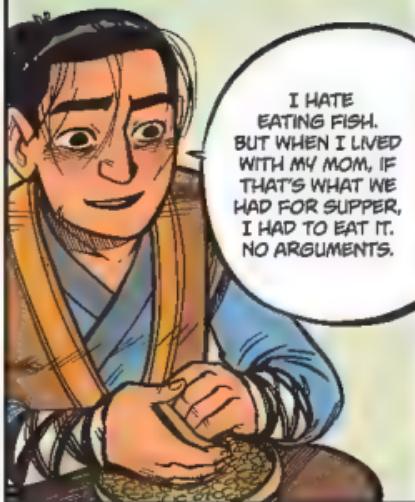






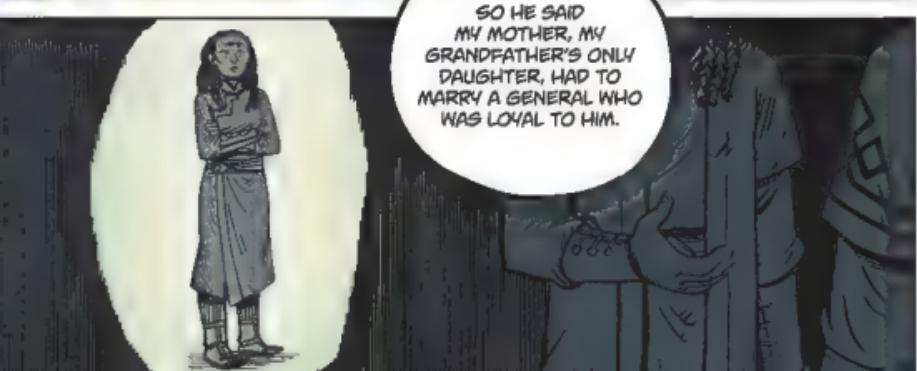
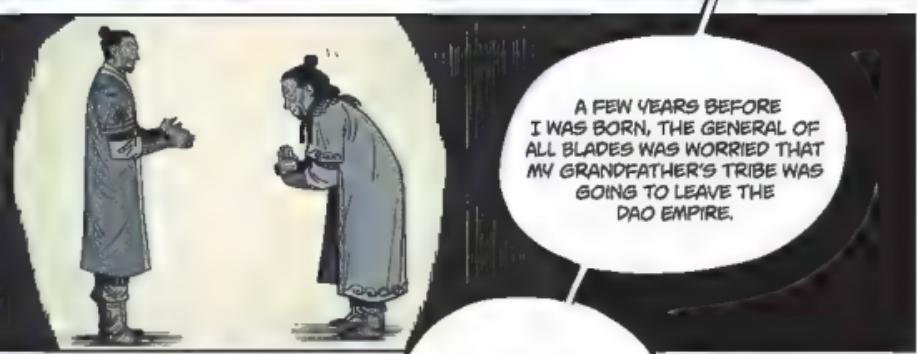


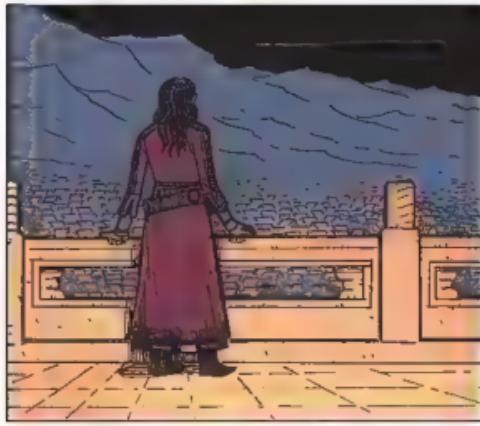


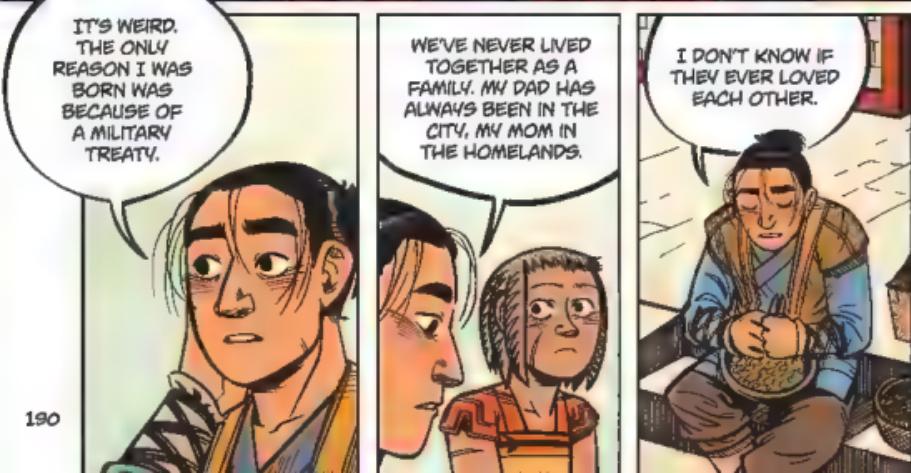


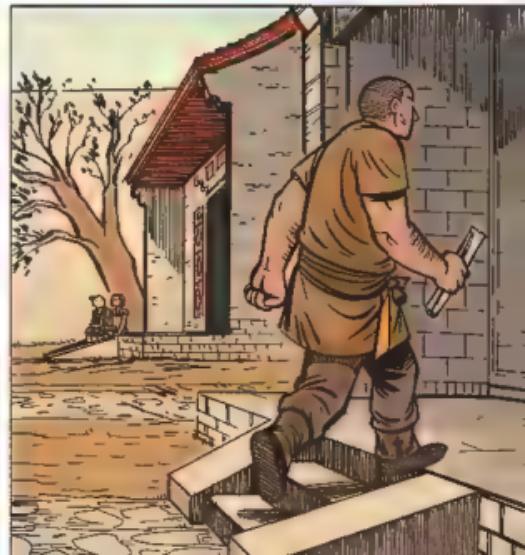


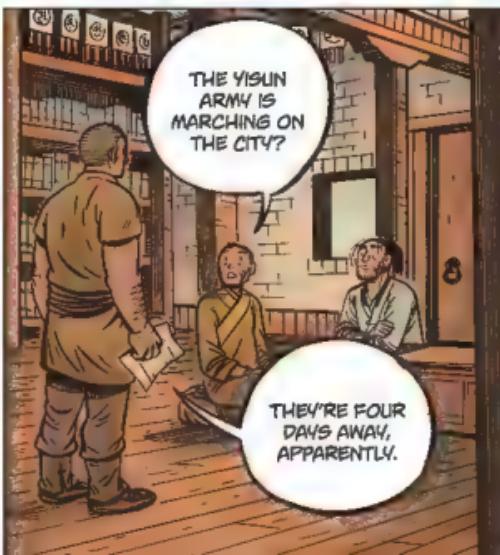












THEY'RE FOUR
DAYS AWAY,
APPARENTLY.

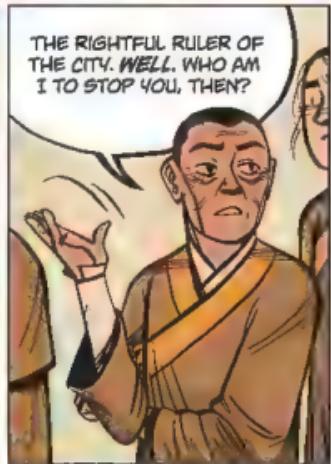












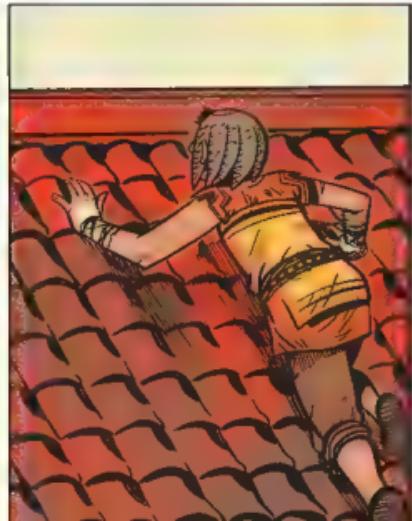


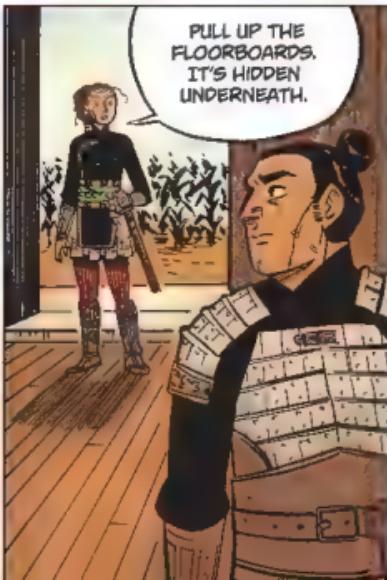
THE FIRST
BUILDERS
CHOSE TO LET
THE KNOWLEDGE
OF THEIR POWER
FADE FROM
THE WORLD.

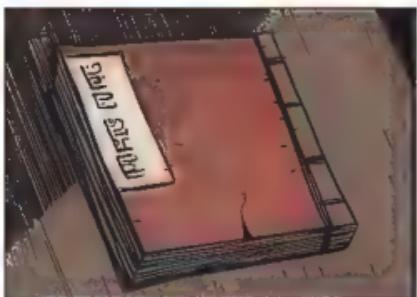
THIS PATH MAY
DESTROY YOU AND
YOUR EMPIRE.



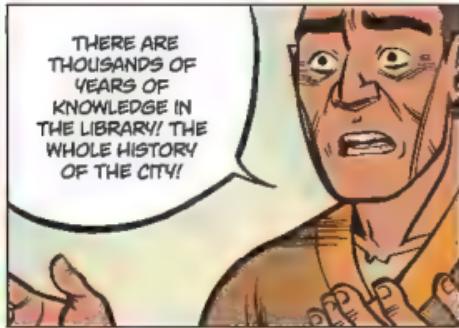


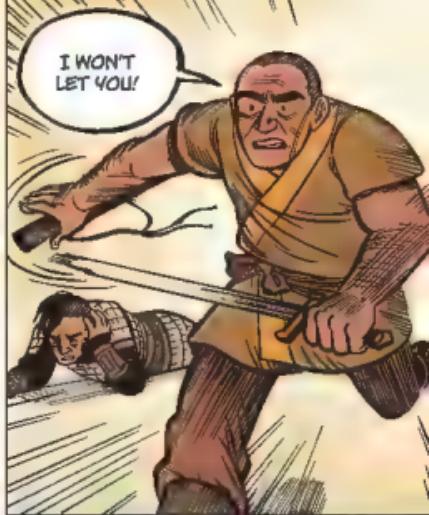
















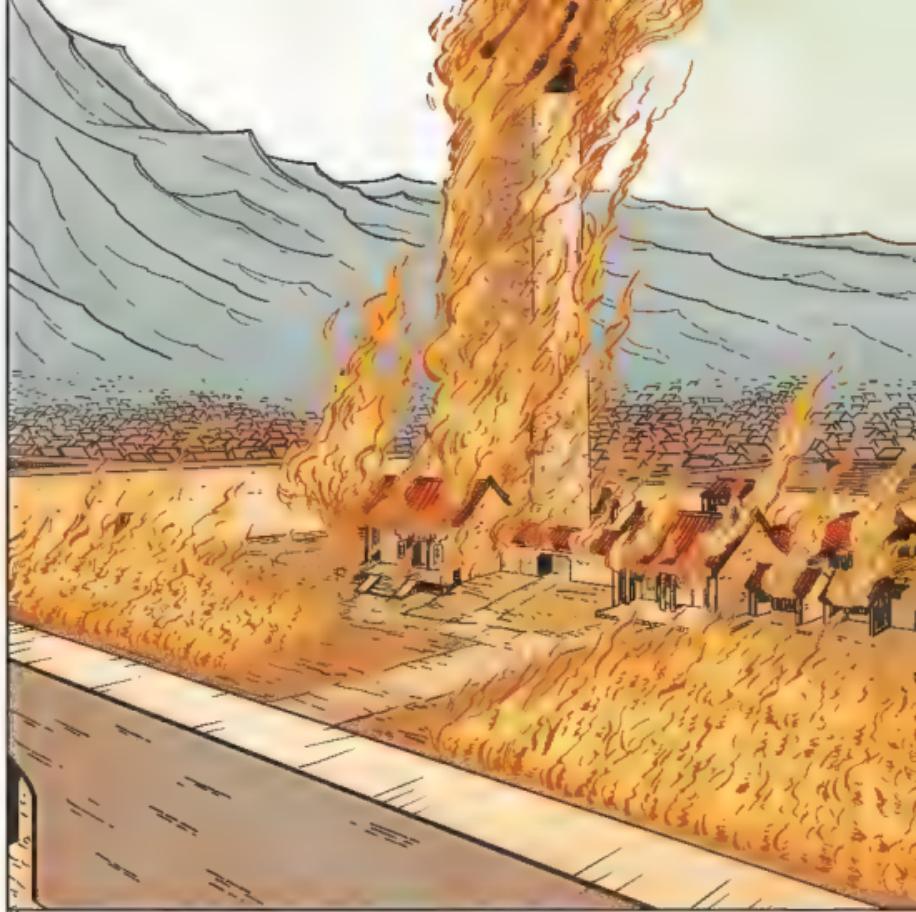




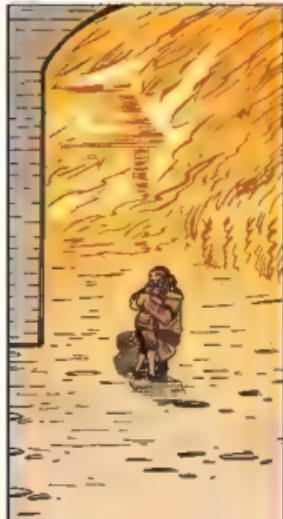








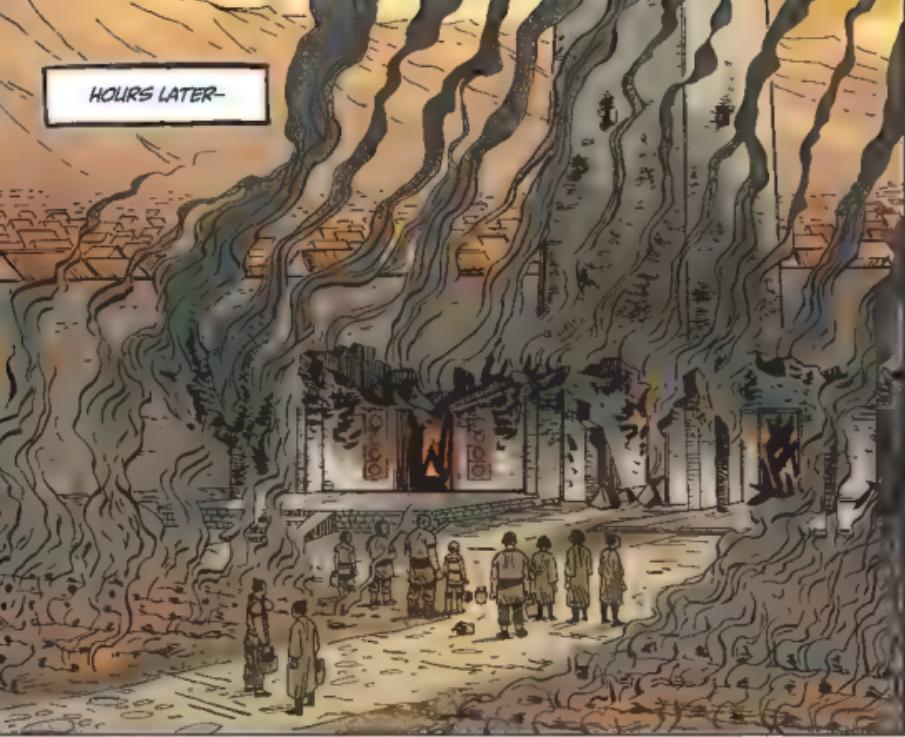








HOURS LATER-













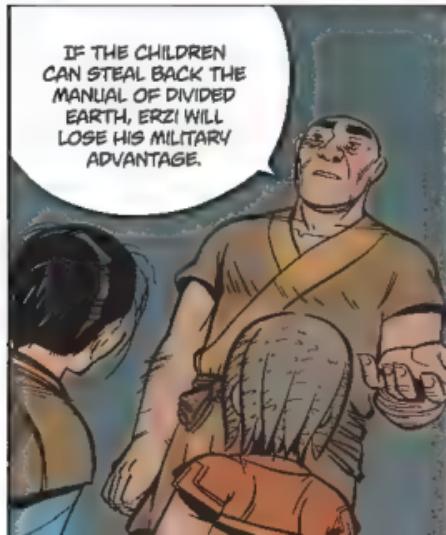
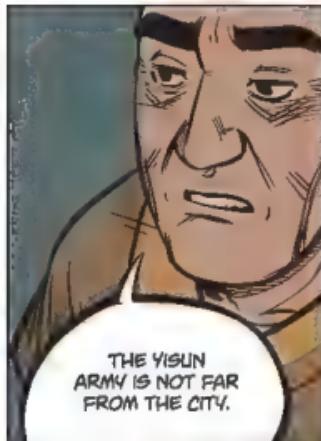






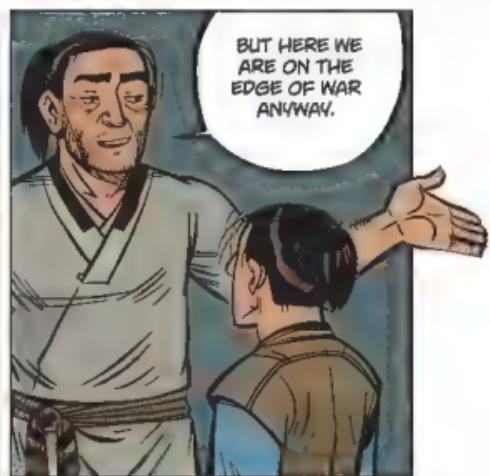




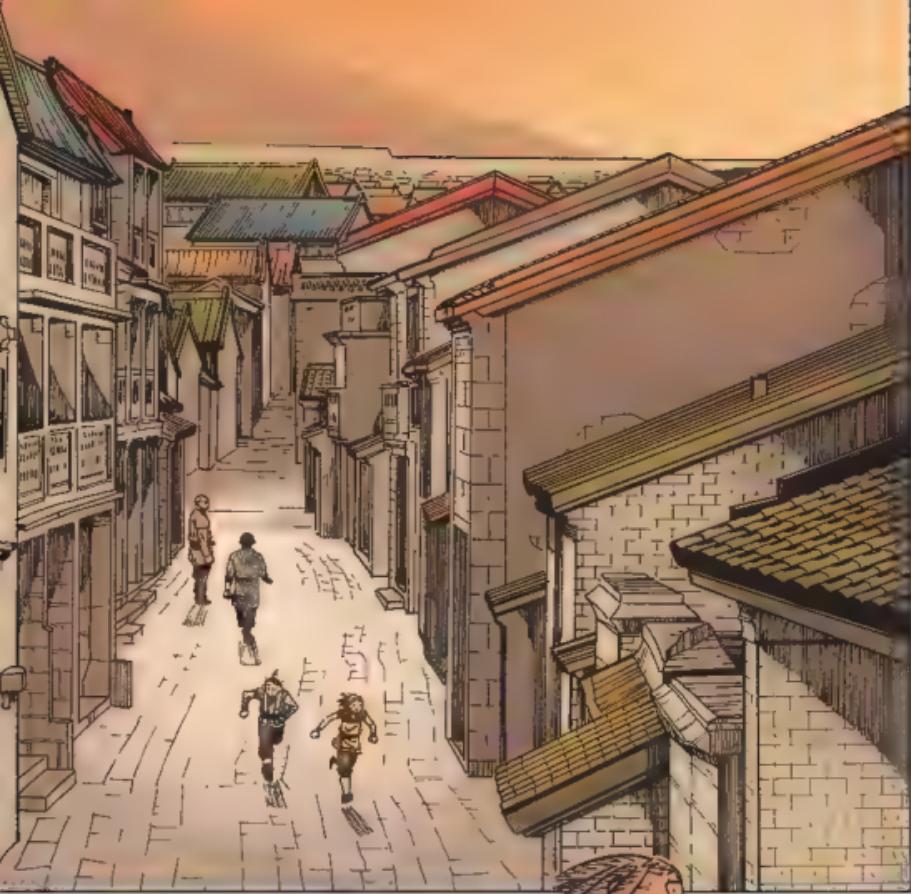


















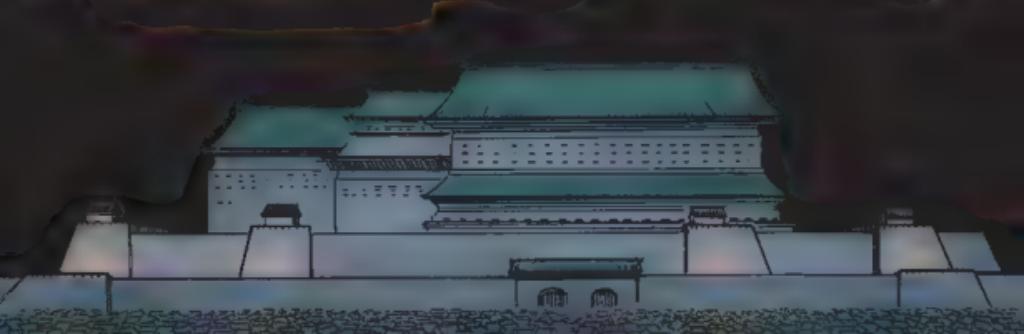
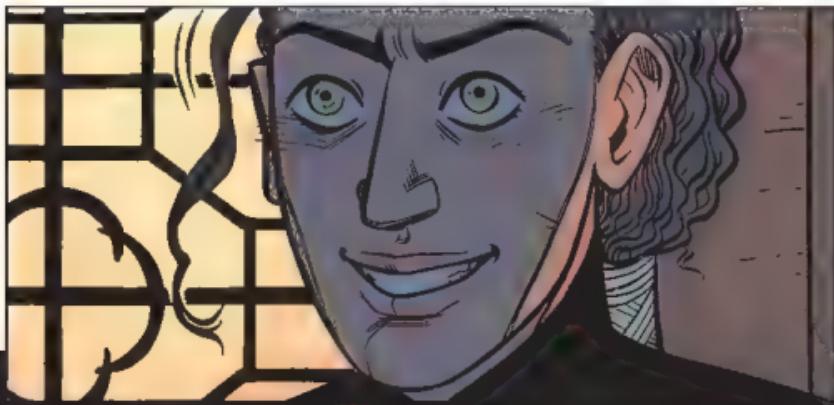












TO BE CONTINUED IN

THE DIVIDED EARTH

BOOK 3 OF THE NAMELESS CITY SERIES



AUTHOR'S NOTE

As of this writing, two books in The Nameless City trilogy are complete, and I will soon begin work on the third, where the story of Rat and Kai and the various characters introduced over the past 450 plus pages will (hopefully) find a satisfying ending. The Nameless City has been an unusual and challenging project for me: It's the first trilogy I've both written and drawn on my own and the first comic I've drawn that has not been set in present-day North America (or its post-apocalyptic future). After two graphic novels set in a modern high school (*Friends with Boys* and *Nothing Can Possibly Go Wrong*), I wanted to stretch my drawing muscles, and I settled on creating a comic with thousands of tiled Chinese rooftops. During my darkest times drawing these two (soon to be three) graphic novels, I may have had one or two moments regretting that choice and longing for the easy-to-draw lockers of a modern high school hallway. But they were only moments. For all its challenges, I've greatly enjoyed drawing the complicated world that Rat and Kai inhabit.

The world of The Nameless City is fictional, but its roots are based on thirteenth-century China. There is no "Nameless City" in history, but I drew from my research on the Yuan Dynasty and the Silk Road to create this vast, multicultural place where Kai and Rat live. Hopefully that research gives their home weight and substance. I have tried to create a world that is visually authentic, if not accurate to historical events of the time. There are differences between the real thirteenth century China and the world of The Nameless City—the history, the language of its people—but I have tried to ground my artwork in that particular time and place. I am grateful to the historical clothing reference books available at the Halifax Public Library (where I did much of my research before moving all the way across Canada to Vancouver, British Columbia), as well as the online photo galleries of libraries across the US and Canada, all of which were a great asset in the years leading up to the creation of this trilogy. Libraries are, as always, a cartoonist's best friend.

CONCEPT ART FOR

NAMELESS CITY

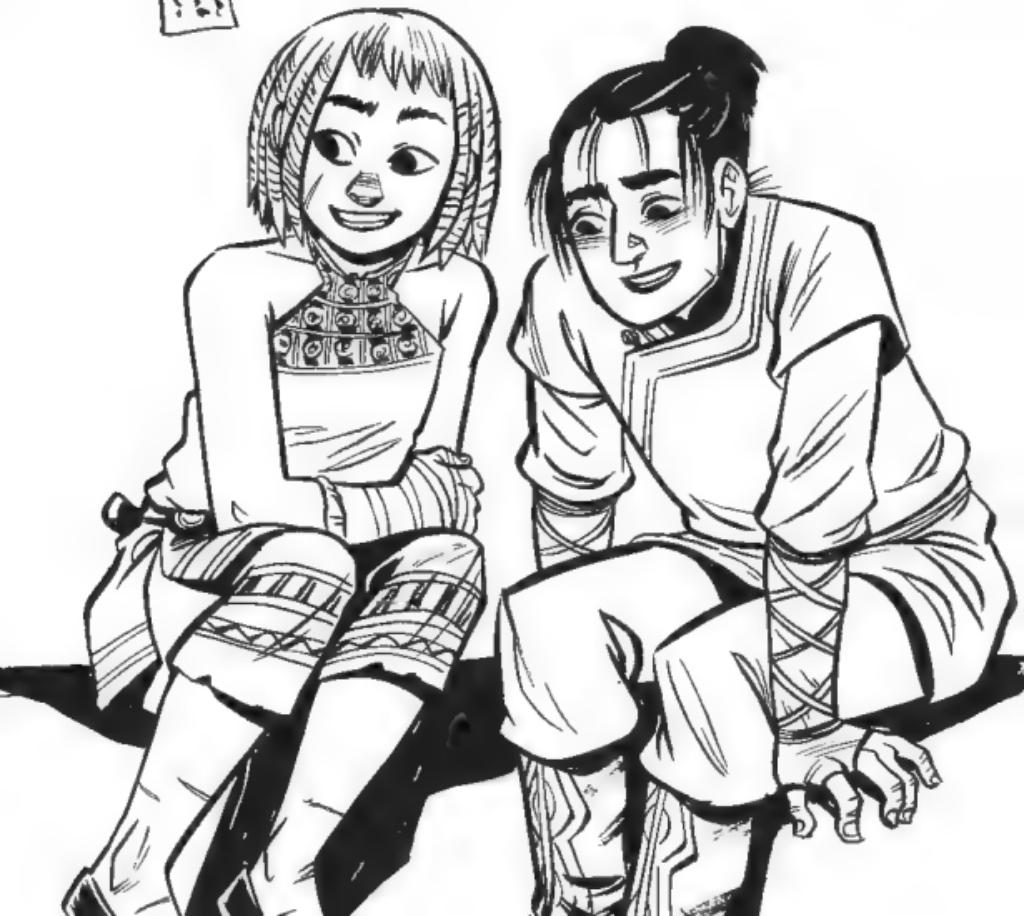
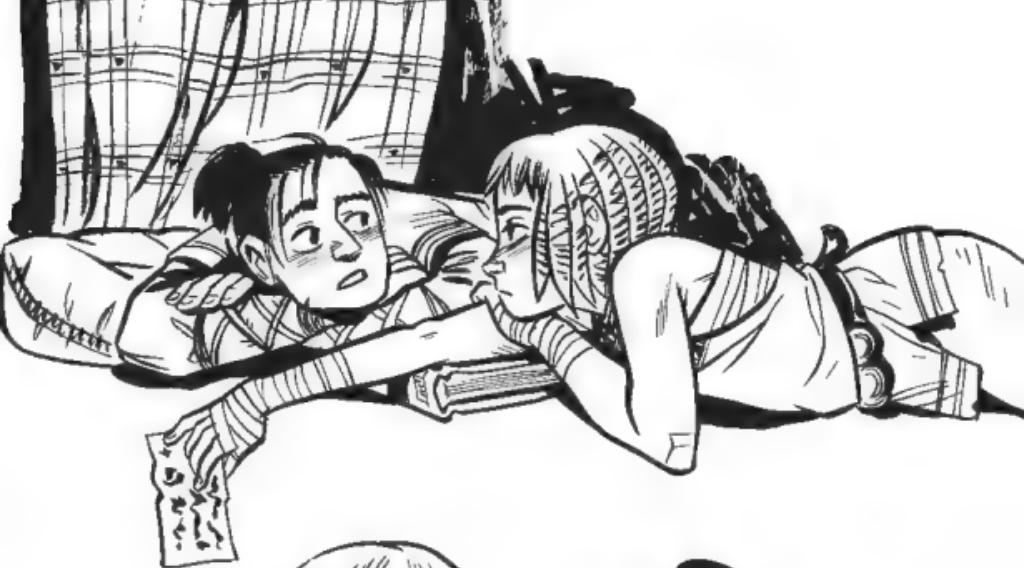




















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Faith Erin Hicks acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested \$153 million to bring the arts to Canadians throughout the country.

Faith Erin Hicks remercie le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien. L'an dernier, le Conseil a investi 153 millions de dollars pour mettre de l'art dans la vie des Canadiennes et des Canadiens de tout le pays.



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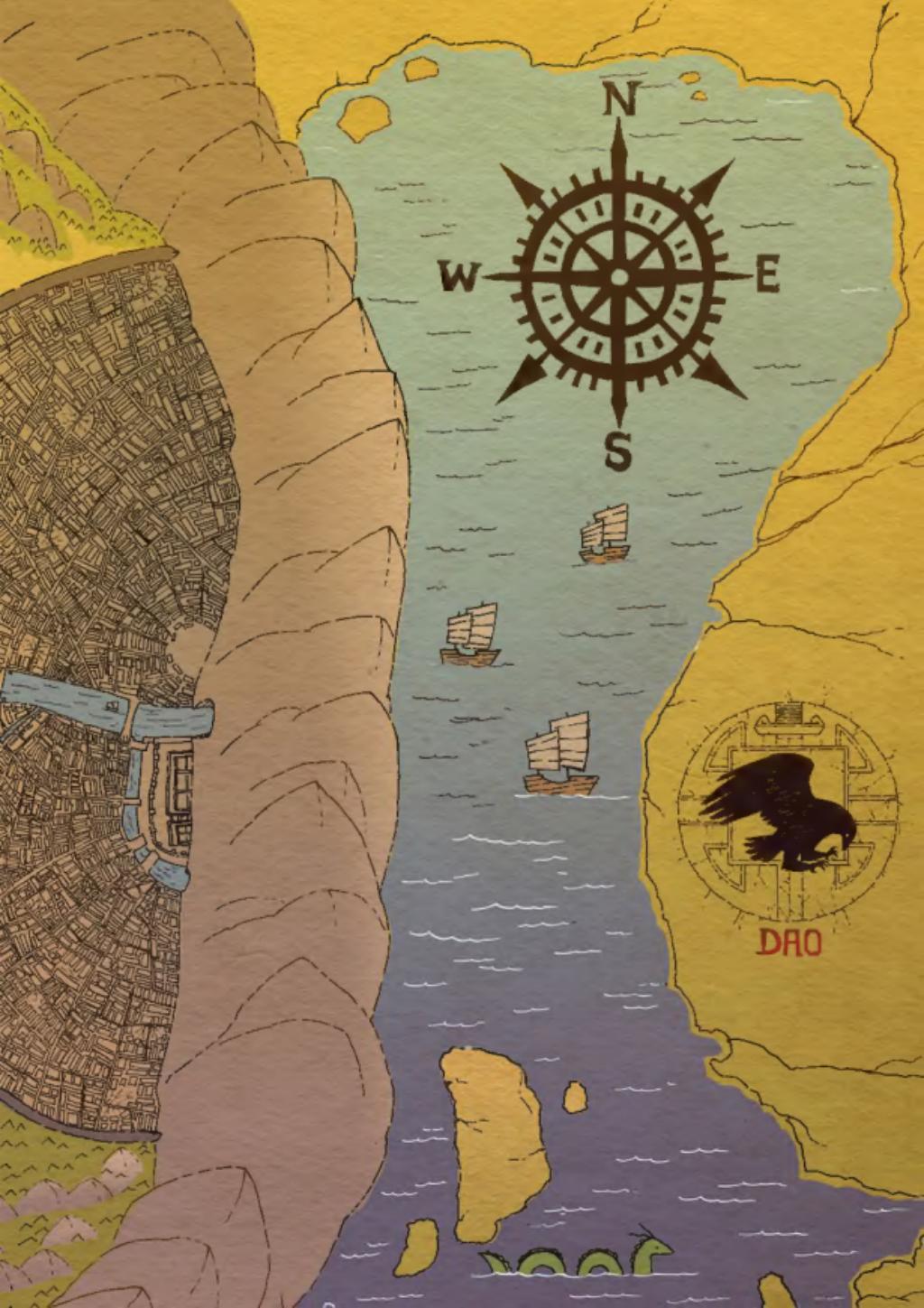
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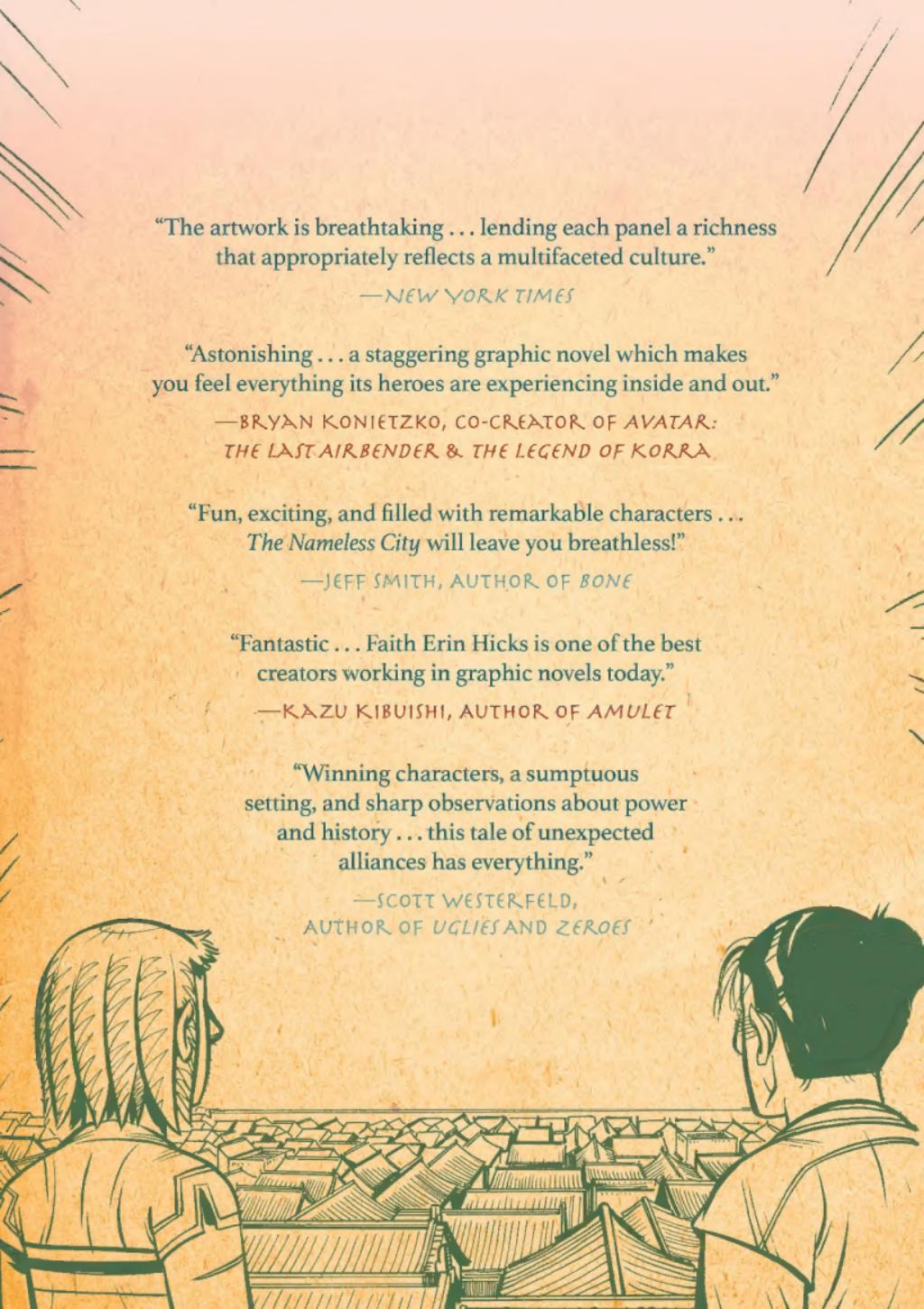
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Penciled digitally in Manga Studio on a Wacom Cintiq. Inked traditionally with a Raphaël Kolinsky watercolor brush.







“The artwork is breathtaking . . . lending each panel a richness that appropriately reflects a multifaceted culture.”

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